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Free to Deployed Areas

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WARNING ⚠



An image from the Department of Defense Inspector General's 2014 Military Housing Inspections report shows a walkway at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Japan.

HOUSING HAZARD

Mold, radon in multiple Japan quarters raise questions over DOD policies

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General accused of sex assault quietly retired with demotion

By DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

A two-star Army general who was fired from his job in Djibouti last year after allegedly groping a female adviser was allowed to retire quietly with a demotion in rank at the same time that a sexual assault case against another Army general received international attention, according to Army officials and military documents.

Then-Maj. Gen. Ralph Baker, the former commander of the U.S. military's counterterrorism task force for the Horn of Africa, was investigated by the Army's Criminal Investigation Command on allegations of sexual assault, according to the newly released documents. Baker retired in September 2013 as a one-star general, although the Army never disclosed the circumstances of his retirement.

Details of the case were

disclosed in documents obtained by The Washington Post through the Freedom of Information Act.

An Army spokesman said Wednesday that Baker was given an administrative punishment at the time of the incident as well as a letter of reprimand — usually a career-ending punishment.

SEE GENERAL ON PAGE 6



Brig.
Gen.
Ralph
Baker

Courtesy
of the
U.S. Army

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I tried to sign up for Netflix but this happened instead."

—Comedian and movie star Adam Sandler, tweeting about his four-movie deal with Netflix

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3. USS Boxer captain relieved after 3 months as commanding officer
4. IG report finds health hazards in Japan base housing, questions Pentagon policy
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GM tries again to crack the midsize pickup segment

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MILITARY

Blast in Kabul kills 3, wounds 8

By SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Three people were killed and eight wounded here Thursday in a suicide bombing next to a van carrying Defense Ministry employees, officials said.

Near-daily bombings in Kabul have coincided with the inauguration of new Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. The attacks appear intended to demonstrate the Taliban's capability to strike at will even in the heavily guarded capital.

A Defense Ministry statement said three of its staff were killed and eight injured in the

blast, which occurred when a man walked to a minibus that was picking up passengers and detonated the explosives he was carrying.

The attack was carried out near the old royal Darulaman palace in western Kabul.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said the group was responsible for the attack.

On Wednesday, seven soldiers died and 19 people were wounded in two Taliban suicide attacks on an Afghan military bus and a security vehicle in different parts of Kabul.

A bomb exploded near Kabul airport without causing casual-

ties Monday, when Ghani was inaugurated during a massive security clampdown in the capital.

On Tuesday, Washington and Kabul signed a bilateral security pact that will allow nearly 10,000 U.S. troops to remain in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of NATO combat forces at the end of this year.

The Taliban have vowed to continue fighting until all foreign troops leave the country.

But in a possible indication that the insurgents may consider the new administration more flexible than the previous one, Taliban leader Mullah Omar said in a statement that the group would

also pursue "political means" to achieve its objectives.

"In addition to the military efforts, the Islamic Emirate is striving to reach its goals through establishing positive relations with trusted international sides," he said in a statement received by Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

In his inaugural address, Ghani urged the Taliban to rejoin an effort at reconciliation that foundered last year after former President Hamid Karzai objected to the opening of a Taliban office in Qatar, where the talks were scheduled to be held.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.
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Afghan forces confident after peaceful switch in power

By CHRIS CARROLL
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The confidence of Afghan security forces is surging after a peaceful transition of government, but their casualties in battles with insurgents are spiking as well, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan said Thursday.

The country's new president, Ashraf Ghani, took office this week and has made a point of embracing Afghan troops and the U.S.-backed security mission, said Gen. John Campbell, commander of U.S. and NATO forces, speaking to reporters at the Pentagon over a satellite link from Kabul.

"That made an immediate impact on them and their morale," Campbell said.

The morale boost came at an opportune time: Taliban insurgents have been pressing hard to make a statement about their viability before the end of the summer fight-

ing season, Campbell said.

The last month has seen a "spike" in the number of dead and wounded Afghan national forces as the Taliban mounted offensives in the Helmand and Ghazni provinces, he said.

As a result, the number of ANSF casualties — as best U.S. officials can determine through Afghan channels — is between 7,000 and 9,000 this year, comparable to all of 2013, he said. An increase in casualties was widely expected when Afghans officially assumed most of the fighting duties from NATO troops last year.

But, Campbell said, some of the reports of Taliban successes have been dramatically exaggerated.

"They have quite frankly won the information war, because all of you back there think the Taliban have made great success, and they haven't," he said.

While Afghan troops still need extensive help with air support, logistics and intelligence, sur-

veillance and reconnaissance, Campbell said their basic fighting ability has grown greatly in recent years.

"There's nowhere that we have Afghan security forces that the Taliban can get the terrain and hold the terrain," he said.

On Tuesday, American and Afghan officials signed a bilateral security agreement that allows 9,800 U.S. troops, primarily trainers, advisers and counterterrorism forces, to stay in Afghanistan beyond the end of the current NATO combat mission in December.

Also on Tuesday, NATO signed an agreement that authorizes 2,000 troops from other NATO nations to remain.

Former Afghan president Hamid Karzai refused last fall to sign the agreement even after it was approved by a national council, saying his successor should be the one to sign it.

Disputed election results delayed the signing of the BSA until

this week, when Ghani was sworn in after a runoff election with rival Abdullah Abdullah.

The post-2014 mission has a relatively tight drawdown timetable, with President Barack Obama announcing plans earlier this year to withdraw half of the U.S. forces at the end of 2015 and the remainder by the end of 2016.

Campbell said he was confident U.S. and NATO forces could successfully fill many of the gaps in Afghan capability in the coming two years, but if the plan needs to change, he'll say so.

"I feel very confident we have a good plan," he said. "But as any commander on the ground, I reserve the right to take a look at the risk to force, risk to the mission and provide my assessment to my chain of command as we move forward."

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Navy announces home for West Coast F-35Cs

The Navy will base its West Coast F-35Cs at Naval Air Station Lemoore in California, the Navy announced Thursday.

A total of 100 F-35C jets will gradually replace 70 aging FA-18 Hornets, increasing the number of

aircraft at Lemoore by 30 by 2028, the Navy said, though the number will be similar to 2013 levels.

The Navy's joint strike fighter variant will be assigned in seven Navy Pacific Fleet squadrons of 10 jets each, and a Fleet Replacement Squadron will have 30 jets.

The move, which will begin in 2016, will increase the number of

operations at Lemoore by about 68,400 each year, and increase operations at Naval Air Facility El Centro by about 800 each year, the Navy said. There will be no changes in the number of aircraft based at Naval Air Facility El Centro.

In August, Bloomberg News reported that flight restrictions on the F-35 were hindering the ability

of the DOD to do software tests, and that the testing for the Marine Corps version of the jet was five months behind schedule.

In March, the Navy's deputy assistant secretary for budget said the sea service was cutting the number of F-35Cs it will buy in the next five years from 69 to 36.

From staff reports

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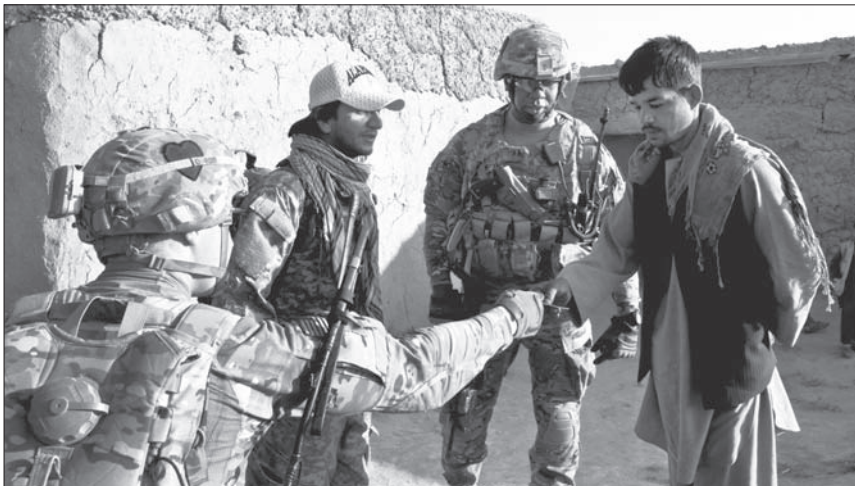
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WAR/MILITARY



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

First Lt. Matthew White, bottom left, gives a man a leaflet as Capt. Rodney Freeman looks on in Parwan province, Afghanistan on June 13.

3 Afghans who fled to Canada now living in fear

The Associated Press

BATAVIA, N.Y. — Three Afghan military officers who sought refuge in Canada after taking off from a military training exercise in Massachusetts said Wednesday they were trying to escape Taliban violence at home but now face the wrath of their own government as well.

"Now that we've decided to seek asylum, the danger has multiplied," said Maj. Jan Mohammad Arash, who along with Capt. Noorullah Aminyar and Capt. Mohammed Nasir Askarzada, traveled more than 500 miles by taxi from a Wal-Mart on Cape Cod to Niagara Falls.

The three walked across the Rainbow Bridge connecting New York to Ontario, Canada, to claim refugee status on Sept. 22 and were turned over to U.S. authorities, who charged them with immigration violations and began removal proceedings.

"Our pictures are in the newspapers in Afghanistan, Pakistan and all around the world. Now our government has turned against us," Arash, 49, said inside the federal detention facility outside Buffalo, where they are being held.

All said they feared they would be killed or imprisoned and tortured if returned to Afghanistan.

In interviews with The Associated Press, the three described feeling elated as they took their \$1,600 cab ride toward the U.S.-Canada border, never expecting they would be turned away and handed over to the United States under a U.S.-Canada agreement that requires asylum seekers to apply in the first country they land in.

"I felt like I was reborn again and I had become free and alive," Askarzada, 28, said of the trip through Massachusetts and into New York. He and Arash answered questions in Farsi, which was translated by their attorney, Matthew Borowski. Aminyar spoke in English.

Askarzada said he has an uncle in Canada and that the three planned to seek him out for help in eventually bringing their families there as well. All are married and have children. Askarzada said his wife is pregnant.

Aminyar said he had been targeted by the Taliban in his village of Khowngi because of his work with U.S. soldiers in killing and capturing Taliban fighters. A platoon leader and company commander, the 30-year-old said he was marked for death after taking part in military training in the United States in 2012 and again in September.

While he was participating last month in a U.S. Central Command Regional Cooperation training exercise at Joint Base Cape Cod, Aminyar said, Taliban fighters went to his Afghanistan home intending to kill him, leading to a frantic phone conversation with his father.

U.S. authorities have said they do not believe the men posed any danger to the public.

Afghan pact rekindles questions

Security deal signing renews debate on how soon US should exit

By DAVID LERMAN
AND ELITAF NAAJIZADA
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The signing of a long-delayed security agreement marks both an end and a beginning for the United States in Afghanistan.

While it ends months of uncertainty about whether the Afghan government would agree on ground rules for U.S. forces to remain in the war-torn country after this year, it also reignites a debate over how fast the remaining American troops should pull out.

No sooner was the Bilateral Security Agreement signed in Kabul Tuesday than Republican lawmakers in Washington called on President Barack Obama to reconsider his plans to draw down U.S. forces completely over the next two years, House Speaker John Boehner, an Ohio Republican, said in a statement. "Of all the challenges facing our strategy there, the most potentially damaging and completely avoidable is quitting just short of the goal line."

Obama has sought to walk a middle ground on Afghanistan, seeking to end U.S. combat while negotiating a phased withdrawal to avoid the abrupt departure from Iraq in 2011 that critics say contributed to instability and paved

the way for Islamic State radicals to seize territory.

Now U.S. forces are conducting airstrikes over Iraq in an effort to push back the Sunni extremists as Obama vows he won't send American troops back into combat there.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's administration signed the security agreement with the U.S. and another with NATO to keep troops in the country after this year and secure billions of dollars in aid for Asia's poorest country.

"The gains of the past decade have been won with blood and treasure," Secretary of State John Kerry said in a statement. "They must not be lost, and we all have a stake in ensuring they're a foundation upon which to build."

Taliban suicide attacks on an Afghan military bus and security vehicle in Kabul Wednesday killed seven soldiers and wounded 19 people, underscoring the dangers from insurgents seeking to retake power through violence.

Ghani took over on Sept. 29 from Hamid Karzai, who refused to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement after 13 years in power during which he increasingly opposed and denounced the U.S., which has lost 2,346 lives in the conflict so far. Ghani had pledged to secure the continued presence of U.S. and NATO troops within a week of taking office.

"We made an agreement which is helpful for Afghan stability and prosperity and for the stability of region and that of the world," Ghani said as his national security adviser, Mohammad Hanif Hatmar, signed the agreements in a televised ceremony with U.S. Am-

bassador James Cunningham.

While the security deal won wide support in the United States, it revived criticism of Obama's withdrawal plans.

"I just don't think it makes any sense," said Michael O'Hanlon, a defense analyst at the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based research group. "It reflects the desire of President Obama to end two wars on his watch."

Withdrawing almost all forces over the next two and a half years is "just compounding the pressure when you have this political change in Kabul and uncertainty in Pakistan," O'Hanlon said in an interview.

The extended U.S. presence gives Americans access to bases from which to fly drones near the tribal area of Pakistan, he said. "That's a good thing for us to have for many years to come," he said.

Obama plans to reduce this year's deployment of more than 30,000 troops to about 9,800 by the end of next year. That number would decrease by about half by the end of next year and decline again to a small security force for the U.S. Embassy in Kabul by the end of 2016.

The vast majority of troops that remain next year will be used to help advise and assist Afghan forces, leaving few Americans available to conduct counterterrorism operations, a State Department official, describing strategy on condition of anonymity, told reporters Tuesday on a conference call.

"It's premature to second-guess the transition strategy," said Brian Katulis, a defense analyst at the Center for American Progress in

Washington, which has ties to the Obama administration.

Katulis dismissed the criticism from Republican lawmakers, who he said "are stuck in the past, wedded to the outdated notion of costly, open-ended commitments of U.S. troops as a cure-all."

The U.S. spent about \$93 billion in military and economic assistance to Afghanistan from the Taliban's ouster in late 2001 through September 2013, with an additional \$6.1 billion budgeted for this year, the Congressional Research Service said in May.

The accord with the U.S. sets conditions for a continued presence, including immunity from Afghan prosecution for American troops. The agreement with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization similarly provides for other nations' forces.

"The NATO Status of Forces Agreement provides the legal basis for our new mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces," NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said yesterday in a statement on the alliance's website. "The signing of today's agreements means that this new NATO-led mission, called Resolute Support, can start on 1 January 2015, as planned."

The Taliban criticized the U.S. in a statement Tuesday, saying its inability to back Ukraine against Russia revealed its weakness, spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement.

"Today, with the help of Almighty Allah and because of the holy Jihad of the Afghan people, America is no more a superpower," the group said in the statement.

EUROPE



Courtesy of U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart

As seen in this aerial view, work continues on the new high school and elementary school for Stuttgart, Germany, students. Garrison officials have proposed that the new schools, slated to open next school year, be named after two Green Berets who were killed in combat in Afghanistan.

Push on to name Stuttgart schools after Green Berets killed in action

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The new Stuttgart High School and Stuttgart Elementary School, slated to open next year, will bear the names of two fallen Green Berets, if the military community here has its way.

As construction continues on the two schools, scheduled to open in time for the 2015-16 school year, a push is underway to name the high school after Chief Warrant Officer 2 Douglas M. Vose and the elementary school after Staff Sgt. Patrick F. Kutschbach. Both were killed in combat in Afghanistan.

The move would mark the first time that any Department of Defense Education Activity schools in Europe have carried the names of service members killed during the post-9/11 era, and only the second time worldwide, according to DODEA. Hampton Primary School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, is named after Capt. Kimberly N. Hampton, a helicopter pilot shot down in Iraq in 2004.

"My desire is to always take the opportunity to recognize those who have sacrificed everything," said Col. John Stack, garrison commander in Stuttgart, who has led the push to rename the schools.

"These particular soldiers served here, deployed from here and went into harm's way. They were on the leading edge of combat in Afghanistan and they didn't come back," Stack said. "So when we build a significant structure like these schools, I think it is a fantastic opportunity to recog-

nize the sacrifice."

During more than a decade of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than 5,000 troops have been killed in action. In the years ahead, as military communities come to terms with those sacrifices, it's likely there will be more requests to get base buildings and schools named after fallen troops. It's only natural for communities to honor those who died in the line of duty, Stack said.

Stack's request is moving up the chain of command. He has already won support from top Army



Kutschbach

officials in Europe, including U.S. Army European Command and Africa Command, hosts some of the U.S. military's most elite fighting forces, including the Army's Green Berets and the Navy's SEALs.

When Stack came up with the idea of naming the new Stuttgart schools after fallen soldiers, he reached out to troops with the 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group, a unit that has spent much of the past decade operating in Afghanistan. The 1-10 command put forward the names of Vose and Kutschbach.

Vose, who was killed in 2009 during combat operations in Afghanistan, was known in his unit for his physical toughness and courage under fire.

Kutschbach, who was killed in action in 2007, also was admired for calm and courage under fire.

"Those battles were fought and won by the guys on the ground, the chiefs, the staff sergeants, who made the ultimate sacrifice," Stack said. "Stuttgart (High School and Elementary) is not a bad name, but you're missing an opportunity to honor a service member and show the community we don't forget."

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GI being treated after rampage in German hospital

Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWÖHR, Germany — An American soldier shot last week by German police in the emergency room of a hospital in Munich is in good condition at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, officials said Thursday.

The soldier, a 28-year-old member of the Army's 2nd Cavalry Regiment in Vilseck, was shot in the legs Sept. 25 by Munich police after he allegedly backed them and a doctor into a corner and threatened to bludgeon them with a fire extinguisher, according to a release from the Munich police.

A spokesman for Landstuhl said the soldier is being treated for a leg fracture.

According to German media reports, the soldier fell and suffered a head injury while leaving the Oktoberfest beer festival, then lashed out at emergency responders as they attempted to treat him. Police and some of the soldier's colleagues helped get him to the hospital, according to Munich's *Abendzeitung*.

The soldier was given a sedative, according to press reports, and held for observation. He woke about two hours later in an

agitated state and began storming through the hallways, grabbing three fire extinguishers from the walls and allegedly attacking hospital staff and patients. An 89-year-old man suffered a split lip in the incident, the *Abendzeitung* reported.

Police called to the scene said they were forced to open fire when the soldier ignored repeated commands in German and English to stop and attempted to attack them with a fire extinguisher. The first shot did not stop the soldier, so police fired a second time. The soldier was treated immediately for his injuries, which were never considered life-threatening, according to Munich police.

The soldier was transferred this week to Landstuhl for further treatment, said Maj. Neil Penttila, a spokesman for the 2CR.

Penttila said the U.S. Army is conducting an internal investigation parallel to an investigation by Munich police. The shooting is under investigation by German authorities, but is believed to be a legal use of a weapon in an emergency situation, the German police release said.

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Courtesy of Bavarian Police

A police officer holds the fire extinguisher that an American soldier allegedly used to threaten German police with during a rampage through a Munich hospital.

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MILITARY

'Redux' retirement bad deal even with bonus

By TOM PHILPOTT

Would an E-6 careerist nearing retirement accept a \$30,000 car loan if forced to pay back a total of \$390,000 in principal and interest?

Would an E-7 accept a \$30,000 loan to make a down payment on a home or to wipe out credit card debt if the lifetime cost of that decision were \$386,000 in lost retired pay?

The answer to both questions, regrettably, is: You bet.

Hundreds of career service members every month make a comparable choice while in their 15th year of service. That's when, in return for an immediate cash bonus of \$30,000, they make an irrevocable decision to opt out of "High-3" retirement and accept the less generous "Redux" plan. The loan shark here is the federal government, the same Congress and Department of Defense that like to get tough with payday lenders outside of military bases who prey on young or naive enlisted members. Meanwhile, they offer their own rotten deal, which every year gets a little worse, say economists at the defense think tank CNA.

Under contract to the Marine Corps, CNA in late September sounded anew its periodic alarm over the Redux retirement option and its onerous \$30,000 Career Status Bonus, in a report titled "Retirement Choice 2014."

Applying current military pay tables and fresh assumptions about the lifetime value of military retirement options, CNA spells out in blunt terms the penalties careerists impose on themselves when they take the \$30,000 bonus while five years from initial retirement eligibility.

For those who elect Redux, retire at 20 years and live until age 79, which is average life expectancy for their generation, E-6s among them will reduce lifetime retired pay by \$335,529. E-7s will lose \$391,600. CWO-3s will lose \$451,303. An O-4, who presumably retires at age 44 rather than 38 for enlisted, would see lifetime pay cut by \$382,522, CNA says.

"The best way to think about this is to consider Redux's \$30,000 Career Status Bonus as a cash-out of part of a member's retirement. "We can calculate how much this cash-out costs ... by thinking of it as a 'loan' to be paid back later in the

MILITARY UPDATE

form of lower retirement checks," CNA says.

While car loans and mortgages have fixed loan periods, often five years for cars and 30 for mortgages, the Redux bonus "has a rather peculiar payback scheme." The member "pays nothing until retirement, pays quite a bit from the beginning of retirement until age 62, and then continues to pay back smaller amounts over the rest of his or her lifetime."

To fully grasp the impact, careerists eyeing the bonus must consider how retired pay is calculated under High-3 versus Redux. Both plans provide an immediate annuity after 20 or more years of service computed on a base amount of their highest three years of basic pay. But rather than 50 percent base pay after 20 under High-3, retirees under Redux receive 40 percent.

That disparity narrows gradually for every year served beyond 20 so that after 30 years of service both the Redux and the High-3 retiree will draw 75 percent of their base amount.

What never disappears is the disparity in plan with inflation protection. High-3 retirees get annual cost-of-living adjustments to match inflation. Redux COLAs are set a percentage point below inflation. There is a one-time catch under Redux to restore lost purchasing power temporarily at age 62 but then the COLA-minus-one formula resumes.

Redux retirees feel the impact for a lifetime and so do their surviving spouses if they are covered under the military's Survivor Benefit Plan. Unless Redux retirees elect to pay a higher SBP premium, survivor payments too are affected by COLA-minus-one.

Congress first approved Redux for new entrants in 1986 in hopes of saving billions of dollars in retirement costs. It repeated it in 2000 on worries that it was compromising career retention rates. But to hold down some pension costs, Congress voted for a scheme that entices some members back into Redux voluntarily with the \$30,000 bonus at the 15-

year mark.

Anita Hattiangadi, director of the Marine Corps Manpower Team at CNA and co-author of the retirement choice report, said in a phone interview that comparing the Redux bonus to a loan retirees must "pay back forever" helps careerists conceptualize the full effect of their decision.

"Another thing we do is to talk about the very high break-even interest rate you would have to earn" for the bonus to make any sense, she said.

Two main reasons given for taking Redux and the bonus is members want to spend the money now, or they think they can do better than under High-3 retirement if they invest that \$30,000 wisely and watch it grow.

"Neither of these reasons should justify the Redux/bonus

choice," the report concludes. "Service members who want or need the money now should look into other ways to obtain the required funds."

Even members who draw their Redux bonus tax free while serving in a combat area, or who shelter the money in their federal Thrift Savings Plan accounts, would almost certainly be better off financially in the long run by sticking with High-3 retirement, the reports argue in considerable detail.

Congress hasn't raised the bonus since it first was offered in 2001. Aline Quester, another co-author and principal research scientist at CNA, said military folks should be grateful because fewer careerists every year are being enticed to accept Redux. The Marine Corps "take rate" has fallen

from 56 percent in 2001 to 12 percent today. That's still too high, the report argues.

"My big worry," said Quester in an interview, "is that Congress will decide that instead of \$30,000 we should give them \$50,000 or \$60,000, which would still be a terrible deal but more people would take it. So I'm very content to have it get to be a worse and worse and worse deal because, I think, the take rates are going to keep falling."

CNA has briefing slides and an online calculator for careerists to use to compare lifetime values of Redux and High-3 for them. These along with the full report are available at: www.cna.org/news/releases/2014-09-29.

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, Va. 20120, email milupdate@aol.com or twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update.

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PHOTO

of the Day



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Navy: Shipyard workers got unearned credit

NORFOLK, Va. — Hundreds of nuclear workers at a Navy shipyard have been placed on restrictive duty after investigators discovered they were given credit for attending continuing training they didn't actually attend, an official said Tuesday.

Norfolk Naval Shipyard spokesman Jeff Cunningham said about 300 workers, or about 6 percent of the shipyard's nuclear workforce, have had their duties restricted until it can be verified they've completed the training. The shipyard in Portsmouth has

also temporarily reassigned eight employees responsible for administering the continuing training program until the investigation is complete.

Cunningham said it's unclear whether workers were simply given credit in error, but they're all required to go through the training to perform their jobs.

"These continuing training program discrepancies in no way represent a failure on the part of workers to demonstrate qualification and competence in performing their duties," Cunningham said in a written statement.

From The Associated Press

MILITARY

Japan housing posing 'serious health hazards'

By ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Mold and inadequate radon gas detection are posing "serious health hazards" to servicemembers living on military bases, the Defense Department Inspector General said in a report detailing 1,057 code violations in Japan base housing.

The report found elevated levels of radon — a naturally occurring gas associated with lung cancer — in multiple buildings throughout Japan, including one at Yokosuka Naval Base that registered nearly six times higher than recommended government limits.

The findings in Japan underscored what the IG stated was a problem affecting the military worldwide: The Defense Department has no uniform standards for detecting and fighting two serious health hazards.

"Based on our inspection, the significant presence of mold and DoD's current ad hoc approach to radon mitigation places unnecessary risk on the warfighter and their dependents," according to the report, released Wednesday.

The IG called for Pentagon-level instructions to detect and remedy both excessive mold and radon, but was rebuffed by John Conger, acting deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment.

Conger stated that the services' differing standards "reflects the continuing evolution in the knowledge of health risk assessment."

"Because there is no U.S. federal standard for radon or mold in the U.S., there is no standard that would be applicable to U.S. facilities outside the U.S.," Conger wrote in a July 24 memo.

The IG disagreed, citing several federal

laws and standards calling for radon mitigation in federal buildings within U.S. borders.

Stating a firm belief that "serious health hazards such as these need to be addressed," the IG called for further comment from the Pentagon by Oct. 31.

The IG inspected housing and common areas at about 2 percent of all housing on select bases in mainland Japan and Okinawa between September 2013 and March, according to the report.

About half of all violations found were fire safety issues such as missing smoke detectors, broken alarms and inadequate suppression systems.

"Installation personnel did not ensure that fire protection systems were properly installed, periodically inspected and maintained," the report concluded. "As a result, risk of personnel injury or death is not effectively mitigated."

Electrical deficiencies, including missing surge protection and exposed wiring, made up the next-largest batch of code violations.

Environmental violations, which included the elevated radon readings, accounted for 87 citations.

Air Force and Marine officials in Okinawa deferred all comments about their bases to U.S. Forces Japan, which said it was pursuing responses to queries.

Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni had the highest ratio of citations, with 160 code violations found among 39 units.

Okinawa Marine bases were cited for 479 code violations after inspections on 416 units.

At Yokosuka, investigators found two buildings with elevated radon levels, including the one that registered a level nearly six times higher than the Environmental Protection Agency recommended standard for

mitigation. A required radon survey was not taken at the Negishi housing area, which is run by Yokosuka, the report added.

Investigators also found radon levels exceeding EPA standards at one building each at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Camp Courtney and Kadema Air Base.

One building at Naval Air Facility Atsugi was found to have elevated radon levels at more than four times the EPA standard, but a subsequent test found acceptable readings.

The IG recommended that each building in question be retested.

Several bases haven't been conducting radon surveys or maintaining databases, according to the report. For example, Atsugi had not performed a comprehensive radon survey for new and renovated housing in the past 23 years.

The EPA estimates about 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the U.S. are radon-related. Exposure to radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer after smoking, according to the EPA.

On Thursday, Commander Navy Region Japan officials acknowledged that radon testing had not been performed for several years at Atsugi.

When the Navy received the IG's preliminary report last year, workers began retesting the buildings for radon levels and fixing the 134 code violations found at Yokosuka and Atsugi. Of those, 107 have been fixed, Navy spokesman Cmdr. Ron Flanders said.

Another 10 of those violations were found in homes slated for demolition at Atsugi, while the rest have been planned for remediation.

"We are quite confident that our families are in safe and quality housing," Flanders said. "We have taken a lot of steps and worked hard over the last several months to

fix the majority of those things."

It was unclear Thursday which building tested particularly highly for radon at Yokosuka, whether it was occupied and the status of current testing.

However, officials said they have been installing radon detection devices, including 300 at Atsugi, and working with Army personnel on retesting.

Although radon was cited in the report as particularly worrisome, it was excessive mold growth that made up the majority of environmental violations.

"When mold issues were identified, rarely was the source of water intrusion addressed," the report stated. "In addition, there is no DoD wide policy or guideline on mold mitigation and control."

Mold issues also have been identified in recent years by residents at bases in the United States.

A class-action lawsuit against a private contractor operating base housing in the Norfolk, Va., area is now in its third year of litigation.

The plaintiffs allege that Lincoln Military Housing's inattention to mold buildup led to allergies, respiratory problems and even brain injuries. The contractor denies the charges.

The IG investigation also tested radiation levels, which measured at expected background levels and posed no demonstrable threat, according to the report.

Radiation became a concern for many in Japan following the March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami that led to meltdowns at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant.

Stars and Stripes reporters Matthew M. Burke and Seth Robson contributed to this report.

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General: Former two-star denies assault, regrets drinking too much

FROM FRONT PAGE

Army Secretary John McHugh ordered that Baker be retired with the demotion as a brigadier general because it was found that he did not serve satisfactorily as a two-star general, the spokesman said. Baker also was fined an undisclosed amount.

Baker denied in an interview that he assaulted anyone but expressed regret for drinking too much the night in question. Several who saw the general that night later told investigators that he was drunk.

"I own the fact that I got intoxicated that night at a social event, and I regret it," Baker said. "It was irresponsible of me. I can understand that in the position of responsibility I had, something had to be done about it."

Baker, who served 31 years, retired as another senior Army

officer, Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair, faced court-martial for alleged forcible sodomy, adultery and other charges in a case that embarrassed the service. He was later acquitted of the assault charges but pleaded guilty in March to having a three-year affair with a subordinate officer and was forced to retire as a lieutenant colonel.

U.S. Africa Command disclosed last year that Baker was fired March 28, 2013, by Army Gen. Carter Ham, then the top U.S. commander for Africa, because of a "loss of confidence in his ability to lead."

Two Army officials told The Washington Post at the time that Baker was removed after allegedly groping a woman, but they did not reveal the severity of the allegations or that the Army was investigating the general for sexual assault.

The alleged victim, a female senior civilian policy adviser, said that on July 22, 2012, she was part of a contingent of Americans who traveled to a private party in central Djibouti, according to military documents.

The woman said that Baker drank wine heavily, and pushed his hand between her legs afterward while they were sitting in the back seat of an SUV on the way back to Camp Lemonnier, the task force's massive headquarters. She resisted his advances but was too embarrassed to mention what was happening to a U.S. soldier and a Naval Criminal Investigative Service agent who were sitting in the front seats, she said.

"I grabbed his hand and held it on the seat so I try to prevent him from putting his hand deeper between my legs," she told an investigating agent in a sworn

statement.

"He responded by smiling at me and saying, 'Cat got your tongue?' I was appalled about what he was doing to me and did not know what to say."

Soldiers serving under Baker told investigators that he had a history of drinking heavily at off-base events and that they would "keep an eye out for him" when it happened, according to the documents.

An Army sergeant added that on one occasion at Camp Lemonnier, a Navy officer, a lieutenant, asked soldiers to go into town and buy alcohol for the general. When they refused, the Navy officer went into town to get alcohol for Baker himself, the soldier told investigators.

Baker denied he drank to excess. No senior members of his command corroborated that he did so when interviewed, he

added.

Army documents show that the alleged victim discussed the night in question with an Air Force colonel who served as a chaplain in Djibouti, and later gave him permission to discuss it with authorities.

The chaplain told investigators in a Feb. 21, 2013, interview that she had come to him "very emotional and upset" after the alleged incident and conveyed essentially the same story to him that she later reported to authorities.

The two men in the front seat of the SUV during the alleged assault told investigators they did not remember any kind of attack occurring.

But the soldier, an enlisted specialist, said that he remembered Baker asking, "What, does that cat have your tongue?" The soldier said he did not know any context for the remark.



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MILITARY

6 from Army National Guard arrested for bribery

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The FBI said Tuesday it arrested six current and former Army National Guard officials for taking bribes in exchange for steering multi-million-dollar contracts to businesses, the latest fallout after Capitol Hill investigations earlier this year pointed to fraud and waste in recruitment and NASCAR sponsorship programs.

Four retirees — including two colonels, a lieutenant colonel and a sergeant major — one active-duty sergeant and one civilian took, or paid out, bribes to steer \$14.6 million to businesses hired to bring in new Guard members. Two of the defendants have pleaded guilty to the charges, the FBI said.

Congressional investigations led by Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., found in February that the Guard's Recruiting Assistance Program, an Iraq War-era program that paid current and former members to recruit friends, defrauded the government out of \$50 million to \$100 million. Further probes found the service spent \$88 million to sponsor NASCAR racing as part of its recruitment efforts but could not say whether the investment resulted in any new members.

"Unfortunately, today's charges

expose National Guard officials who were 'always ready' to pocket bribes and 'always there' to take kickbacks," Dana Boente, U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, said in a release.

In one case, an active-duty colonel in charge of the National Guard Bureau's Guard Strength Directorate arranged a bribery scheme with a retired colonel who owned a company called Financial Solutions.

Former director Robert Porter, 50, of Columbia, Md., who is now retired, was paid a percentage of all contracts steered to the company by its founder retired Col. Charles Sines, 56, of Stafford, Va. Charges were also filed against an enlisted soldier and civilians.

Jason Rappoccio, 39, an active-duty sergeant first class from Hampton, S.C., was allegedly paid \$30,000 by the company Mil-Team Consulting and Solutions to steer a \$3.7 million contract to a chosen company, according to the FBI.

The owners of the company pleaded guilty and admitted to paying the bribe. The FBI said they paid \$6,000 in cash to Rappoccio and then paid the remainder to Rappoccio's wife with a cashier's check routed through a relative's company.

McCaskill said bribery by top Guard leadership should result in jail time.

"This kind of betrayal of the public trust is outrageous, and dishonors the uniform of the brave members of the National Guard," she said in a release.

The senator led hearings on abuse of the Recruiting Assistance Program, what she called "one of the biggest fraud investigations in U.S. Army history" in February.

Army investigators opened hundreds of cases of possible fraud, including instances where suspects were paid hundreds of thousands of dollars after claiming to have recruited friends and relatives.

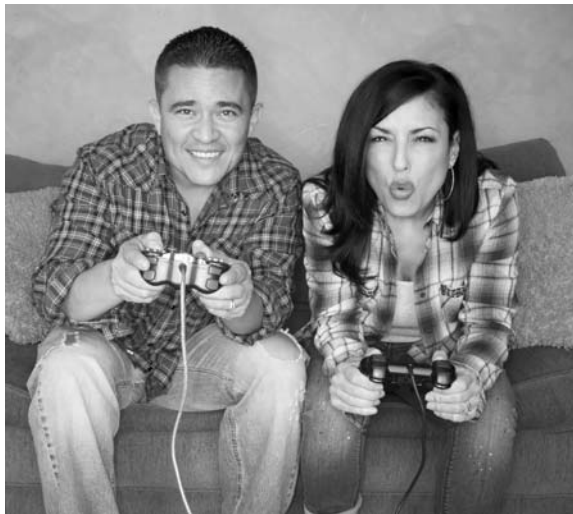
In May, a Senate hearing found that the Guard's \$32 million annual sponsorship of NASCAR aimed at recruiting had failed to

net a single new member in 2012. Last year, it generated less than 8,000 leads on potential recruits; the Guard needs about 1 million to reach its recruitment goals.

The Guard dropped its NASCAR sponsorship in August after an internal review.

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Retired Marine picked to run Gitmo war court

From wire reports

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon disclosed Tuesday that it had installed a recently retired Marine lawyer to run the war court at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Retired Maj. Gen. Vaughn A. Ary began work Monday as "convening authority for military commissions," said Lt. Col. Myles B. Caggins III, a Pentagon spokesman for Guantanamo issues.

Ary also has the title of director of the Office of Military Commis-

sions. It is a three-year civilian post covered by the Senior Executive Service, Caggins said. Ary reports to the deputy secretary of defense.

Ary's job includes deciding which charges to approve, potentially blessing plea agreements, assigning U.S. military officers to jury pools and deciding which trial experts and services to fund.

Ary retired in July as the Marine Corps Commandant's senior attorney after a 27-year military career.

Coast Guard calls off search for missing Marine

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Coast Guard's Guam sector has called off the search for a Camp Foster Marine reported missing Sept. 26 after wading into heavy surf on the northwestern shore of Tinian.

Cpl. Donovan Clancy, 26, from Ridgway, Pa., was temporarily assigned to the small island in the Northern Marianas with Marine Wing Communication Squadron 18 when he was swept over the reef at LamLam Beach, Marine and Coast Guard officials said.

Exhaustive land, sea and aerial

searches covered 1,714 square nautical miles before they were called off Wednesday morning by Coast Guard District 14 Commander, Rear Adm. Cari Thomas, according to a Coast Guard statement.

Units from Marine Air Group 12, Kadena Air Base, Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron Two-Five, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Guam, as well as Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Public Safety, Division of Fish and Wildlife Enforcement and Homeland Security and Emergency Management took part in the search.

MILITARY

Long deployments push some sailors to leave the Navy

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Lengthy deployments and a risk-averse service culture are among the frustrations sailors face in the Navy, according to an independent survey led by a Navy pilot.

More than 5,500 officers and enlisted sailors responded to an unofficial online poll in May as part of the 2014 Navy Retention Study, a project led by F/A-18 pilot Cmdr. Guy M. Snodgrass to understand why sailors, and officers in particular, leave the Navy early. The service is not involved with the project, although its personnel chief, Vice Adm. Bill Moran, has expressed interest in it and spoken with the project leaders.

A solid majority of respondents in the voluntary survey (62 percent) described the balance between work and home as "not ideal," according to results released last month. Many described their last deployments as long (between seven and nine months), and just under half expected upcoming deployments to be just as lengthy or longer.

Majorities also said that senior leaders didn't care what they thought and didn't hold themselves accountable. They strongly believed the Navy was risk-averse and unable to stomach mistakes, and they held that performance rankings are based on factors other than merit.

"There are no quick fixes," the survey's authors concluded. "Resolute and thoughtful changes are necessary to improve the factors that impact sailors the most."

On the positive side, survey respondents reported they believed in their work and trusted subordinates and peers. Pluralities of enlisted and officer respondents said they wanted to retire from the service, with majorities citing benefits and pay as main factors for staying in.

Participants in the survey were self-selected, meaning there was no scientific sampling of sailors. It relies on participants to be honest about their active duty status, rank, length of service and com-

mitment to take the survey only once. More than half of participants were officers, who represent less than 20 percent of all sailors.

The survey is posted online at www.dodretention.org, a website established by the survey authors. It encouraged participants to urge others to take the survey.

The survey group said it relied on help from active-duty sailors with experience conducting official Navy polls, as well as a statistician at the U.S. Naval War College to craft questions and remove bias. The group distributed the survey through military social media channels, keeping it open during all of May. More than 6,100 people responded, and more than 5,500 of the polls were considered complete enough to include in the results, according to a report accompanying the survey findings.

Cmdr. Chris Servello, a spokesman for Moran's office, said that while survey results roughly mirror the command's own polling, the authors draw different conclusions on some points. Recent benefit increases go against the report's suggestion that Navy pay and benefits are declining, he said.

In the past year, Moran's office increased sea duty pay rates and added a high-tempo allowance for sailors at sea over 220 days.

The Navy also kept tuition assistance at a 100 percent funding level and expanded eligibility for advancements at sea.

"Those were all meant to get after one, incentivizing sea duty, which is where we need our folks," Servello said, "and, two, it was meant to compensate folks for the longer deployments that we're seeing."

Navy leaders have said lengthy deployments are a concern as growing mission requirements combine with maintenance and funding issues to push ships to sea more frequently and for longer periods of time. Where deployments once averaged around six months, more are lasting seven to eight months, with carriers staying out even longer.

Fleet Forces Command, which determines deployment tempo, has unveiled a plan to stabilize



CHRISTOPHER LINDAHL/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Petty Officer 2nd Class Ma Paula Fuerte signals an MV-22 Osprey to launch from the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island on Sept. 9 while the ship was underway in the Indian Ocean.

tour lengths in the coming years. The Navy has said less publicly about concerns touching on service culture, the capabilities of its commanders and perceptions held by junior officers, all areas of interest in the recent survey.

Earlier this year Snodgrass, now an executive officer for a fighter squadron in Japan, and others sent Moran a paper that argued that the Navy faced a manpower crisis in the near future unless it made substantial changes. Titled "Keep a Weather Eye on the Horizon," it described a Navy culture growing rigid and top-heavy as an improving econ-

omy opened doors outside the service.

The paper recommended changing advancement opportunities, reducing administrative burdens and reinstating the critical-skills bonus for surface warfare and aviation commanding officers, a change the authors say would push officers at a critical juncture in their careers to remain for additional tours.

Authors of the current survey offer similar recommendations, as well as a request that the Navy "stop proactively highlighting" the firings of its commanding officers and command master

chiefs. While Moran has agreed that retention could become an issue as the economy improves, he has said current numbers remain positive.

The survey report says that while the Navy is taking some steps to address issues, many issues require long-term attention.

"Retaining quality individuals is critical to the continued success of the U.S. Navy, as we cannot directly hire into positions of responsibility — we must promote from within," it reads.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Civilian casualty standard eased in Iraq and Syria

By KEN DILANIAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama announced in May 2013 that no lethal strike against a terrorist would be authorized without “near-certainty that no civilians will be killed or injured.”

But amid unconfirmed reports of civilian casualties, the White House said this week that U.S. bombing in Iraq and Syria is not being held to the near-certainty standard. And the Pentagon, hamstrung by limitations in intelligence gathering, has been unable to determine in many cases whether the casualty reports are true.

“We do take extreme caution and care in the conduct of these missions,” Rear Adm. John Kirby, the Pentagon’s press secretary, said. “But there’s risk in any military operation. There’s a special kind of risk when you do air operations.”

When Obama outlined his strategy to fight the Islamic State group earlier this month, he cited as parallels the limited U.S. counterterrorism campaigns in Yemen and Somalia, where American drone missile strikes have targeted al-Qaida-linked militants. Aides said he was also thinking of Pakistan but didn’t mention those strikes because drone killings there are entirely the work of an officially unacknowledged CIA operation.

But when it comes to civilian casualties, it has become clear that the targeted killing model that Obama has expanded and honed throughout his presidency does not apply to the more intensive military operation against the Islamic State and the Khurasan Group in Iraq and Syria.

According to the White House, the reason the near-certainty standard is not applicable turns on a fine point of international law — the theory that the U.S. is not involved in “active hostilities” in Yemen and Somalia, but is in Syria and Iraq. Such distinctions are controversial, given the frequency with which American bombs and bullets have flown in both countries.

A more practical reason is that the self-imposed rules on drone strikes against al-Qaida are simply too restrictive for a conventional military air campaign against the Islamic State group, which the U.S. says is both a terrorist group and an occupying army, and has ordered the Pentagon to destroy.

“It is much different in scope and complexity” than Yemen and Somalia, said Rep. Adam Schiff, a Democrat and an intelligence committee member. “I think it will be very hard to apply the very restrictive rules they put in place for other theaters.”

‘We do take extreme caution and care in the conduct of these missions. But there’s risk in any military operation. There’s a special kind of risk when you do air operations.’

Rear Adm. John Kirby
Pentagon press secretary

The drone attacks in Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan are carried out either by the CIA or, at times in Yemen and Somalia, the military’s Joint Special Operations Command. They employ Hellfire missiles, relatively small munitions designed to destroy people and vehicles.

In Iraq and Syria, the Air Force and Navy are using cruise missiles and conventional guided bombs to destroy buildings and other infrastructure that Hellfires can’t bring down. Allies, including Britain, France and Arab countries, are also using conventional bombs.

While most of the air strikes have been directed at the Islamic State group, the U.S. also used cruise missiles to attack the Syria headquarters of the Khurasan Group, an al-Qaida cell said to be plotting attacks on the West. Syrian opposition figures have said that one of those missiles went astray Sept. 23 and killed women and children in the village of Kafr Daryan near Aleppo.

All told, human rights groups have said that as many as two dozen civilians have been killed in U.S. and allied bombings in Iraq and Syria. The U.S. military says it hasn’t confirmed any civilian death but hasn’t ruled it out in every case, either.

White House spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden said the near-certainty standard was intended to apply “only when we take direct action outside areas of active hostilities.”

Military officials say they are taking great care to avoid civilian casualties in Iraq and Syria, consistent with international law. But international law does not require a near certainty that civilians won’t be harmed in military strikes. U.S. officials say harm to noncombatants is inevitable in a large bombing campaign — especially when the enemy is embedded in civilian areas.



Kurdish peshmerga fighters stand guard on the front line with the Islamic State group as they patrol in Rabia, northwestern Iraq, on Wednesday.
HADI MIZBAN/AP

Turkey approves military operations

The Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey’s parliament gave the government new powers Thursday to launch military incursions into Syria and Iraq and to allow foreign forces to use its territory for possible operations against the Islamic State group.

Parliament voted 298-98 in favor of the motion which sets the legal framework for any Turkish military involvement in Iraq or Syria, and for the potential use of Turkish bases by foreign troops — possibly including U.S. forces operating from air bases in the east of the country. Asked what measures Turkey would take after the motion is approved, Defense Minister Ismet Yilmaz said: “Don’t expect any immediate steps.”

The vote occurred as Islamic State militants pressed their offensive against a beleaguered Kurdish town along the Syria-Turkey border. The assault, which has forced about 160,000 people to flee across the frontier in recent days,

left Kurdish militiamen scrambling Thursday to repel Islamic State extremists pushing into the outskirts of Kobani, also known as Ayn Arab.

Turkey, a NATO member with a large and modern military, has yet to define what role it intends to play in the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State group.

Parliament had previously approved operations into Iraq and Syria to attack Kurdish separatists or to thwart threats from the Syrian regime. Thursday’s motion would expand those powers to address threats from the Islamic State militants who control a large cross-border swath of Iraq and Syria, in some parts right up to the Turkish border.

“The motion prepares the legal ground for possible interventions, but it is too early to say what those interventions will be,” said Dogu Ergil, a professor of political science and columnist for Today’s Zaman newspaper.

Ergil said the motion could

allow Iraqi Kurdish fighters, for example to use Turkey’s territory to safely cross into Syria, to help Syrian Kurdish forces there, or the deployment of coalition forces’ drones.

Elsewhere, President Barack Obama’s envoy responsible for building the international coalition against Islamic State militants arrived in Baghdad on Thursday for consultations with Iraqi authorities. It was the first visit to Iraq by retired Marine Gen. John Allen since he accepted the job last month.

Allen was accompanied by his deputy, Brett McGurk, according to a State Department statement.

Also Thursday, The New York Times reported that more than 5,500 people have been killed in Iraq since the Islamic State offensive in northern Iraq last June. The newspaper quoted the United Nations as saying those deaths represented nearly half of the 9,343 civilians killed in Iraq from January through September.

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PHOTOS BY CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

Hot Doug's owner Doug Sohn takes the order of David Kudla, center, and Christopher Sanders, who were first in line at 12:45 a.m. Customers of the gourmet hot dog stand in Chicago waited in long lines that extended into a local neighborhood to buy a hot dog before the business closed its doors.

In line for a taste of hot dog history

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Chicago's hippest hot dog stand helped elevate the lowly sausage into a culinary superstar by stuffing it with exotic ingredients including escargot, foie gras and rattlesnake. When the owner announced the gourmet shop was closing, everyone expected encased-meat aficionados to line up for one last taste.

But this? Lines forming deep in the night. Lawn chairs, card tables, poker chips, sleeping bags and booze to help pass the wait of up to eight hours. A spot in line popping up on Craigslist for \$300. Apologetic announcements telling patrons they won't reach the front of the line and secure their coveted dog before closing time.

As Hot Doug's prepares to close Friday, in a city that takes



Michelle Ocoba sleeps under a blanket as she waits in line for Hot Doug's to open Wednesday.

its hot dogs seriously, the line outside Doug Sohn's "sausage superstore" has become as big a sensation as the stand itself. And nobody entertains the idea for even a second that this is the least bit crazy.

So, who are these people?

Well, first we have Christopher Sanders and his buddy David Kudla. They became Wednesday's first customers at 12:45 a.m., unfolding lawn chairs to wait for the doors to open at 10:30 a.m.

Sanders, 29, had never been to Doug's before — put off, by all things, by the sight of constant but shorter lines.

"I've driven past it, seen the lines and said, 'I'm not waiting that long, it's crazy,'" he said. "I will never get a chance to do it ever again."

There is also Sergio Deleon, who arrived at 3 a.m., who knows that if he's not in his college classroom by 11 it will cost him a full grade in class.

"Gonna be worth it," said Deleon, 24, though he had a plan for salvaging an A — buy a dog for the professor too.

"See if it works," he said.

Retired physician Jack Laude, from his lawn chair about 70 people down, can tell you all the reasons why hot dogs aren't healthy.

Not that Laude, 62, would be deterred from the boar and bacon cheese dog he's intent on ordering.

"You want to know the secret of longevity?" he asks. "Pick your parents well."

Gov't website for doc payments needs work

WASHINGTON — Although it's called "Open Payments," the government's new website doesn't make it easy to find out whether your doctor is getting freebies, travel or other financial benefits from drug companies and medical device manufacturers.

This should be a clue: The website lacks a "Find Your Doctor" button.

The Obama administration

says consumers will start seeing some improvements later this month, particularly when it comes to navigation.

However, an Associated Press analysis found significant problems, including large chunks of missing information and disputed data. And those are not likely to be cleared up soon.

Disclosure of financial relationships between clinicians and industry has long been a priority for consumer advocates, who worry about unseen incentives that may influence prescribing decisions,

the use of high-tech tests and even surgical procedures.

The Open Payments program was required by President Barack Obama's health care law, but for now it's not easy to pry loose the data.

Open Payments is administered by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which runs those giant benefit programs as well as HealthCare.gov, the online portal to the government's newest insurance plan.

From The Associated Press

Secret Service head resigns over incident at CDC

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — One lesson from Julia Pierson's short tenure as director of the agency that protects the first family: The Secret Service can't keep secrets from the president.

The undoing of Pierson, who resigned Wednesday, was not telling the president about a Sept. 16 incident in Atlanta in which President Barack Obama rode an elevator with an armed security contractor during a visit to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, two White House officials said. The armed contractor's proximity to Obama violated the agency's security protocols.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson as well as Obama appeared unaware of the full extent of the Atlanta incident and the Sept. 19 security breach in which a man armed with a knife jumped the White House fence and entered the building. Johnson, whose department oversees the Secret Service, was the driving force behind Pierson's resignation Wednesday, the White House officials said.

Since taking office last year Johnson had made it clear that he wouldn't tolerate even a whiff of scandal. He had repeatedly expressed concern about the Secret Service performance in the wake of the White House intruder, the officials said. Both officials

were not authorized to discuss the issue by name and requested anonymity.

The White House learned about the Atlanta incident just before details were published by two newspapers. In a meeting with Johnson, Pierson offered her resignation without being asked, but Obama had already told aides he thought she should go, the first official said. No one put up any resistance when she offered to step down, the official said.

Pierson did not respond to a telephone message seeking comment. In an interview with Bloomberg News, she said she felt that leaving the agency "was the noble thing to do" and that her departure "would take pressure off the organization." She suggested she felt forced out of the Secret Service after more than 30 years, just 18 months as director.

Pierson wasn't the first Obama administration official to deal with a scandal, but how she handled it contrasts starkly with others, including her immediate predecessor, Mark J. Sullivan.

Sullivan almost immediately suspended, fired or transferred implicated officers and agents in the immediate aftermath of a 2012 prostitution scandal in Colombia. He also quickly changed the rules governing employee behavior during work trips.



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NATION

Ebola victim left Africa after direct contact

The Dallas Morning News

By Wednesday afternoon, his name and photograph had gone viral. Thomas Eric Duncan, in his mid-40s, hails from Monrovia, the coastal capital of the West African country of Liberia.

Duncan contracted the first Ebola case diagnosed in the U.S. He was exposed to the often deadly disease in his home country but showed no symptoms until he reached Dallas.

Duncan remains in intensive-care isolation at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas, near the culturally diverse pocket of Vickery Meadow in northeast Dallas. He arrived there Sept. 20 from Liberia, moving in with a

tenant in the Ivy Apartments.

For the past year, The New York Times reports, Duncan had worked as a driver at Safe-way Cargo, the Liberian customs clearance agent for Federal Express. But his employer told The Times that Duncan quit "abruptly" on Sept. 4, giving no reason.

"His sister came from the United States and he asked for a day off so that he could go meet her at the Mamba Point Hotel," said Henry Brunson, the company's manager. "He quit a few weeks after that."

As Duncan's biographical details took on a life of their own, they blazed a trail from Dallas to San Angelo, where the man's

19-year-old son, Kasiah Duncan, attends college. Kasiah said he hasn't seen his father since he was a boy. He had heard that his father has Ebola but would say no more.

"I have homework to do," he said.

Kasiah's mother, Louise Troh, also declined to comment. "Leave me alone," she said before hanging up. "Only talk to the CDC," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Duncan first sought treatment at Presbyterian on Friday. The virus was not identified, and hospital officials said Wednesday that there was a breakdown and the fact that Duncan had just left

Liberia was not fully communicated to the team treating him.

Duncan's motives for coming to the U.S. became the subject of widespread speculation on Wednesday. The New York Times reported that Duncan had direct contact with a woman stricken by Ebola on Sept. 15, four days before beginning a trip that would eventually land him in Dallas. The Times attributed the information to the woman's parents and to Duncan's neighbors in Monrovia.

The family of Ebola victim Marthalene Williams, 19, said they took her by taxi to a hospital with Duncan's help on Sept. 15. They opted for the taxi after fail-

ing to get an ambulance, said her parents, Emmanuel and Amie Williams. She was convulsing and, her parents said, she was also seven months pregnant.

Turned away from a hospital for lack of space in its Ebola treatment ward, the family said they had no choice but to take her home, where she died about four hours later, at 3 a.m.

The woman's parents described Duncan as a family friend who was also a tenant in a house owned by the Williams family.

Neighbors said Duncan helped carry Marthalene Williams, who had lost the ability to walk, back to the family home later that evening, hours before her death.



MARK DUNCAN/AP

Jennifer Cramblett and her partner have sued a Chicago-area sperm bank that provided them with sperm from the wrong donor.

White lesbian couple sues after sperm bank mistake led to use of black donor

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — An Ohio woman and her partner have sued a Chicago-area sperm bank after she became pregnant with sperm donated by a black man instead of a white man as she'd intended.

Jennifer Cramblett was five months pregnant and happy with her life in April 2012. She and her partner had married months earlier in New York, and within days of their nuptials she had become pregnant with donor sperm at a fertility clinic in Canton.

Cramblett, 36, and her partner, Amanda Zinkon, 29, were so elated that they called Midwest Sperm Bank LLC outside Chicago to reserve sperm from the same donor in the hope that Zinkon would someday also have a child.

That's when Cramblett received some disturbing news, says a lawsuit filed Monday against Midwest Sperm Bank in Cook County, Ill. She learned from an employee at the sperm bank that she had been inseminated with sperm from No. 330, a black donor, and not No. 380, a white donor she and Zinkon, who are white, had chosen.

"How could they make a mistake that was so personal?" Cramblett said during a telephone interview on Wednesday.

According to the lawsuit, her excitement about the pending birth was replaced with "anger, disappointment and fear."

Telephone calls to Midwest Sperm Bank were not returned on Wednesday. It's unclear who the sperm bank's attorney is.

Cramblett said she and Zinkon love their 2-year-old daughter, Payton, very much and wouldn't change anything about her. But they are concerned about raising her in the predominantly white community where they live.

The lawsuit said they had moved from Akron to Uniontown for better schools and to be closer to Cramblett's family. She said that as a lesbian she has felt the sting of prejudice but doesn't know what it's like to be mistreated because of her skin color.

Therapists have recommended that the family move to a more racially diverse community with good schools, the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit says the sperm bank has no electronic record-keeping and no quality controls that would have prevented it from sending the wrong sperm to fertility clinics. The lawsuit seeks a minimum of \$50,000 in damages. Cramblett's attorney, Tim Misny, said some of the compensation would pay for ongoing counseling.

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WORLD

Protesters warned not to storm government offices

By ELAINE KURTENBACH
AND LOUISE WATT
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hong Kong police warned of serious consequences if pro-democracy protesters try to occupy government buildings, as they have threatened to do if the territory's leader didn't resign by Thursday.

Tensions mounted ahead of the deadline as students for the city's Beijing-backed Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying to step down — part of broader demonstrations pushing for electoral reforms for the Asian financial center.

Both the Chinese government and the student protesters seemed to be losing patience after the weeklong street protests, the biggest challenge to Beijing's authority since China took control of the former British colony in 1997.

In a reflection of growing concern in Beijing, China's ruling party mouthpiece warned in a commentary Thursday of "chaos" in Hong Kong, and expressed strong support for Leung in his face-off with the protesters, an amorphous movement led mostly by university students.

Late Thursday afternoon, hundreds of young protesters crowded in front of the gate to the territory's government headquarters, spilling around the sides of the huge building and across the street. Many donned face masks and goggles, some had gas masks and rain capes — all precautions in case police might use tear gas and pepper spray, as they did last weekend to try to disperse demonstrators.

'We can't just sit here forever because we can't achieve what we want. We hope to have a direction with actions soon, not just sit here aimlessly.'

Maness Ko
21-year-old college student

"We can't just sit here forever because we can't achieve what we want. We hope to have a direction with actions soon, not just sit here aimlessly," said Maness Ko, a 21-year-old college student.

The protesters oppose Beijing's decision in August that candidates in Hong Kong's first direct election in 2017 for the territory's top post be approved by a mostly pro-Beijing committee. They accuse the central government of reneging on its promise that the chief executive would be chosen through "universal suffrage."

Hong Kong police spokesman Steve Hui told reporters that blocking or occupying government buildings would not be tolerated and would lead to "serious consequences."

The students remained watchful but calm, looking on as police brought in tubs of gear, including some labeled "rubber batons." Each change of police shift brought on a ruckus as students resisted but eventually gave way after being reassured they could recoup the pavement outside the government compound's gate.

"We are not asking C.Y. to come talk to us. We are demanding he resign," said May Tang, a 21-year-old student at Lingnan

University, referring to Leung. "It's too late for his government to be accountable to the people so we want a new one."

The People's Daily said in its commentary Thursday that the "central government fully trusts Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying and is very satisfied with his work." It added that it firmly supports the Hong Kong police — criticized for using tear gas and pepper spray on the protesters last weekend — "to handle illegal activities in accordance with the law."

"Handling affairs without following laws, Hong Kong society will be in chaos," it said, adding that the rule of law must be safeguarded to ensure "healthy development of democracy and politics in Hong Kong."

The comments appeared to signal Beijing's growing concern that the protests could spiral out of Leung's control. But the Communist Party is known to send mixed signals at times, and such public support for Leung could also mean that Beijing is holding him responsible for bringing order quickly and decisively.

Some protesters said they disagreed with the student leaders' threat to occupy government



Wong Maye-E/AP

A student protester gets emotional while pleading for a peaceful resolution on Thursday in Hong Kong. The student leaders of the protests are warning that if the territory's top official doesn't resign by tomorrow, they will step up their actions — including occupying several important government buildings.

buildings.

"Getting into a confrontation with police doesn't seem peaceful to me," said Wilson Yip, a 22-year-old recent university graduate. "If they try to force themselves inside and confront police, I don't see what kind of point that would make. It may make fewer people support the protests."

In Washington on Wednesday, Secretary of State John Kerry

met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and said the U.S. supports the "highest possible degree of autonomy" in Hong Kong. He said he hopes Hong Kong authorities exercise restraint and allow the protesters to express their views peacefully.

Wang said that the protests are "China's internal affairs" and that no country would allow "illegal acts" against public order.

Japanese officials: Most victims of eruption were killed by volcanic rocks

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Doctors have determined that almost all of the dozens of people killed on a Japanese volcano died of injuries from being hit by volcanic rocks that flew out during its eruption, police said Thursday.

Rescuers have retrieved 47 bodies from the ash-covered summit area of Mount Ontake since Saturday's eruption.

Doctors concluded that all but one of the bodies showed signs of having been hit by volcanic boulders and rocks, Nagano prefectural police said. The other victim died of burns from inhaling hot air.

Most of the bodies were found near the summit, where many climbers were resting or having

lunch.

The eruption at Mount Ontake, in central Japan, caught hikers by surprise. Seismologists have said that increased seismic activity had been detected at Ontake, one of 47 active volcanoes in Japan that are under 24-hour monitoring, but that nothing signaled such a big eruption.

The search for more bodies continued Thursday, but ended early due to bad weather and concerns about toxic gases. Authorities are looking into the possibility that about 20 people caught in the eruption are still missing.

The death toll is the highest from a volcanic eruption in Japan's postwar history, exceeding the 43 people killed in the 1991 eruption of Mount Unzen in southern Japan.



TOKYO FIRE DEPARTMENT/AP

Firefighters carry a hiker who was trapped in the summit area of Mount Ontake during Saturday's initial eruption in central Japan.

Putin: state will support sanctions-hit sectors

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin says the state will offer support to sectors of the economy that have been hit by international sanctions, but says the country in general is unconcerned about the sanctions' consequences.

Putin said Thursday the sanctions, imposed by the United States, the European Union and others over Russia's role in the Ukraine conflict, violate basic principles of the World Trade Organization and obstruct international economics.

Putin, who was speaking to a major investment forum, added "we regard this calmly."

The ruble has fallen sharply as the sanctions have taken hold and Russian companies are severely restricted from borrowing on Western capital markets.

Putin said "the state is ready to provide support to those sectors and companies hit with unwarranted external sanctions."

From The Associated Press

NATION

A gun in every home

Firearm ownership simply a fact of life in southwestern Colorado town of Nucla

By LAUREN LOFTUS

Special To The Washington Post.

DRIVING north on U.S. 141 in southwestern Colorado, the road descends from red rock plateau into a wind-blown expanse of bedraggled shrubs and hardy desert trees called Paradox Valley. Passing only the occasional deer, the two-lane highway eventually ends at the intersection of the Dolores River. Just beyond its muddy bank lies the tiny town of Nucla.

The area's once booming uranium mine has long been shuttered, while the halls of Nucla High School echo with the sounds of only a few dozen students. Main Street is dotted with boarded-up buildings and deserted after sunset. With a poverty rate of nearly 20 percent, it's clear Nucla is in need of jobs, an economic boom that remains out of reach.

But there is at least one thing the town is not lacking. A gun in every home, required by law.

In May 2013, the Nucla Town Board passed the Family Protection Order, requiring every head of household to own a firearm. As written, the ordinance provides for the emergency management and general safety of a town with a population of less than 700.

Modeled on a similar law in Kennesaw, Georgia, that's been on the books since 1982, Nucla's ordinance includes all the expected exemptions: those who have a physical or mental disability that would prohibit them from using a firearm; anyone convicted of a felony; those who cannot afford a gun; and conscientious objectors.

Local law enforcement, consisting of a few Montrose County sheriff's deputies, was never enlisted to go door to door to make sure everyone has a gun. Most people already had one anyway.

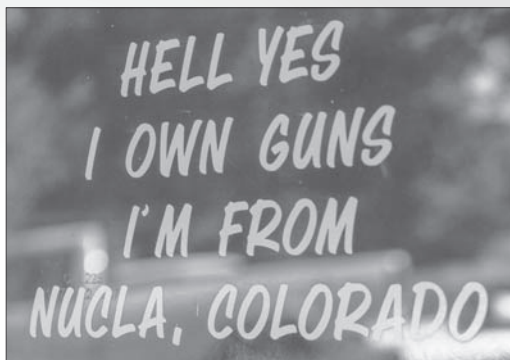
It's a wholly unenforceable law, something the town board understands. And yet only one trustee out of six voted no, while most residents are apt to pass it off with a shrug. Fitting for a place called Paradox.

Nucla occupies a tiny dot in the largely rural, rugged map of Colorado's Western Slope. It's a place that, on first glance, has been forgotten. The nearest stoplight, hospital and Walmart are two hours away.

There is a polling place for general elections in the equally-small town of Naturita five miles south though most people opt to mail in their ballots. But with a dwindling, aging population, their vote is barely a drop in the bucket.

As a rule, Nucla residents are self-sufficient folk, tenacious about their history and each other. It all feels very, very far away from the lawmaking and politicking happening 350 miles away in Denver. A state law limiting the size of ammunition magazines to 15 rounds, passed in response to the Aurora movie theater shooting, is seen as more of a nuisance than a matter of life and death.

The Family Protection Order is often framed by Nucla residents as an underdog rallying cry to catch the attention of those far-off lawmakers. A statement that says, "Hey! Remember us? We matter too." But it's also a continuation of life as is in Nucla; as it's



PHOTOS BY MORGAN SPIENS, NEWS 21/AP

A sticker adorns one of Nucla, Colo., Town Board member Les Mahana's vehicles. A law in Nucla requires every household to have a gun.

always been. A life that's fiercely protected despite it never being easy.

Board trustee Richard Craig says it all started, in a way, as a joke.

"This is a hunting, ranching community and everybody already has guns," says Board trustee Richard Craig, 74, explaining that the law did not change anything, except perhaps a brief uptick in media attention.

Trustee Bill Long was the only dissenting vote but he's quick to clarify that it wasn't because he doesn't like guns. It was because of government overreach.

"There's no difference between the government telling us you can't own guns or you must own guns," Long maintains.

To Long, being raised with guns and learning to respect them as

you would, say, a car, is just a part of life in a town as irrevocably tied to nature as Nucla is. He owns five or six himself.

After the ordinance passed, Long says he was contacted by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

According to Long, the Center offered to help him sue Nucla as it successfully had in Nelson, Georgia, which less than a month before attempted to pass its own mandatory gun ownership ordinance.

"Then they found out I had guns and I haven't heard from them since," Long says.

Bill Long, right, of Nucla, Colorado, handles a .300-caliber magnum rifle, one of the guns he keeps at his home. Long was the only Nucla Town Board member to vote against an ordinance that mandates gun ownership. He voted against it not because he is against guns, but because he views any kind of government involvement in deciding whether one should own a gun or not as government overreach.



NATION



PHOTOS BY MEL MELCON, LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

People make their way down the street in front of the wall mural on San Julian St. in the heart of Skid Row in downtown Los Angeles. The mural was conceived and produced by activists and artists as a declaration of neighborhood pride and identity. Kelly Kunta, 64, below, homeless on and off for decades, said he most recently arrived on Skid Row a half year ago. Kunta said he hoped the mural would be a wake up call to City Hall and the nation to do something about the homeless crisis.

Sign of survival

Los Angeles 'Skid Row Super Mural' symbol of neighborhood's effort to reclaim its identity

BY GALE HOLLAND
Los Angeles Times

Skid Row is the place that dares not speak its name.

The neighborhood of 10,000 people on the eastern end of downtown Los Angeles — with the largest concentration of homeless people in the country — is generally not listed on municipal signs or maps. The local firehouse was ordered years ago to take "Skid Row" off its ambulances and rigs.

As bars, lofts and restaurants started to pop up in Skid Row's traditional territory, the city — prodded by business groups — began using names like Old Bank District, Historic Core, Central City East or Industrial District to describe parts of the 50-block area.

This month, a group of residents sought to reclaim their turf, at least symbolically.

They put the final touches on an 18-by-50-foot mural with a detailed street map of the area and a clear message: Skid Row is a legitimate Los Angeles neighborhood, and should not be erased.

Organizers call "Skid Row Super Mural" a show of pride and self-determination by a community sick of being defined by its most unfortunate citizens.

Detractors say the mural is a misguided attempt to paper over the misery of the homeless enclave.

City Councilman Jose Huizar says it is the kind of art he envisioned when he pushed in October to lift the city's 11-year-old mural

ban.

"It's community pride on the one hand, it's cleverly done and it creates conversation and debate, which often great public art does," said Huizar spokesman Rick Coca.

The San Julian Street project, which was registered under the city's mural ordinance, is on the wall of a property known as Bob's Bakery owned by businessman Peter Ta, according to city records.

The first phase, which went up in February, depicts the city seal and the words "Skid Row City Limit" in the familiar white-on-green lettering of official signs. In a jab at the city's failure on the homelessness front, the population is listed as "Too Many."

In another quietly subversive touch, the map text states that its boundaries are taken from Jones v. City of Los Angeles, a court case that barred nighttime homeless sweeps by police.

"The mural is the history of the community," said Isabel Rojas-Williams, executive director of the Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles. "It's very cleverly done."

General Jeff Page, a formerly homeless activist who created the project, said he is as appalled as anyone that people languish in the streets. But Skid Row is not just people lying on sidewalks getting high, he said.

While City Hall was sleeping, he said, thousands of Skid Row residents — whose rehabbed flop-houses and apartment projects are

protected by covenants for a generation — have been bettering the community.

The mural was designed by Stephen Zeigler and painted by street artists calling themselves the Winston Death Squad, among them a man known as Wild Life, whose work often spoofs official signs.

The optimistic picture of the Skid Row community is not shared by everyone.

Raquel Beard, who heads the Central City East Association, the local business group, said the Skid Row she sees everyday is a place of pain, misery and degradation.

"Maybe in 10 years it will be an urban and edgy," she said, "but before I can jump to Skid Row chic we have bigger issues to deal with. Let's heal, then they can think about it as jazzy."

Page, however, foresees a day when the Skid Row mural will join the Hollywood and Rodeo Drive signs as L.A. icons.

That day may be far off. Directly across from the mural, men and a few women were played out on the sidewalk, smoking a street drug called spice, or chanting in languages known only to themselves.

Said a homeless man who calls himself White Boy: "I love the General and I wish him well, but society's not ready for Skid Row. It's a 20-year plan for Skid Row and when it ends no way we're in it."



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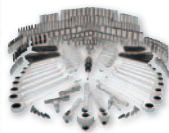
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NATION

Gamblers are abandoning dog tracks for casinos

The dog days of greyhound racing



By STEVE HENDRIX
The Washington Post

FOR a long time, the one-armed bandits inside the Mardi Gras Casino and the four-legged racers outside on the greyhound track were all spinning in the same direction.

The arrival of slots in the 1990s was a jolt for West Virginia's fading dog-racing industry. As in many states, lawmakers here allowed new casinos to open only in conjunction with existing dog and horse tracks and steered a cut of their winnings to purses at the track.

"It was kind of a golden age after that," said Sam Burdette, head of the West Virginia Greyhound Breeders Association.

But now, an explosion of casino gambling is strangling the greyhound industry that it once rescued. The bettors have largely migrated to the faster-paced gambling inside; the dogs are running in front of mostly empty stands, and the marriage between the bing-bing-bing and the bark-bark-bark is heading for divorce. West Virginia may become the latest state to sever the link between casinos and tracks, a trend that could finally spell the end of the sport of queens.

"We'll be done in a couple of years if nothing changes," said Harvey Maupin, 50, a longtime West Virginia greyhound trainer who races at both of the state's dog tracks, in Charleston and Wheeling.

In much of the country, these are the dog days of greyhound racing. Once a mainstay of American gambling, dog tracks seem unlikely to outlast growing animal welfare concerns and the relentless expansion of other ways to gamble.

"People want instant gratification these days," Burdette said. "If I'll take you half an hour to lose \$50 at a racetrack. You can do it in five minutes sitting in front of a slot machine."

Nationally, betting on greyhound racing has plummeted from a peak of \$3.5 billion in 1991 to \$665 million in 2012. At one time, more than 50 tracks oper-

ated in 15 states. Now, 21 tracks remain in seven states as interest has waned and legislatures have begun to re-examine the requirement that casinos operate — and subsidize — greyhound racing as a condition of offering slots, poker and blackjack.

Massachusetts, after a campaign highlighting animal welfare concerns, voted to ban racing altogether in 2010. Iowa became the latest state to cut the connection between casino revenue and dog tracks in May when Gov. Terry Branstad, a Republican, signed a law that will shutter one of the state's two tracks and eliminate the yearly \$14 million subsidy to the greyhound industry.

Similar "decoupling" initiatives are expected in other racing states this year, including West Virginia, where the policies are complicated by the fact that the

governor's 80-year-old mother is one of the state's best-known greyhound owners.

West Virginia casinos are still required by law to operate the tracks for 220 days of racing a year. But the tight-knit racing community accuses its old ally of giving up on marketing the sport, and sometimes worse.

"I honestly think they're working against us," said Rod Monroe, who raises about 100 dogs on a farm near Wheeling. "I think they want to make it hard for people to come out to see the dogs."

At one point, patrons at Wheeling Island Casino were diverted through a parking garage to reach the dog track, Monroe

said, although the facility's new general manager has restored the old entrance. At Mardi Gras, race fans take a side elevator and navigate across two floors of gaming to access the outside gallery, which itself is filled with slot machines and table games.

In many states, casinos that want to get out from under the racing subsidies have formed a surprising alliance with animal welfare groups, who say the sport is cruel. In the worst cases, advocates say trainers have beaten dogs, fed them contaminated meat and trained them using live rabbits as bait.

But even at good kennels, they say, dogs are often injured in the races and

endure training routines in which they are housed in pens for most of the day.

"None of them are malicious acts of cruelty, but in our view these standard practices together constitute an industry that is cruel and inhumane," said Carey Theil, head of GREY2K, an advocacy group that pushes anti-racing legislation around the country.

Greyhound breeders dispute that critique, pointing out that many urban dogs spend their days in crates. They were outraged in March when Danny Adkins, a senior executive of the company that owns both the Charleston casino and another in Hollywood, Fla., published an op-ed with

Humane Society President Wayne Pacelle that called for allowing casinos to get out of racing on animal welfare grounds.

Critics say the casinos' real concerns are sinking revenue, as gambling expands in one state after another, and the costs of operating the dog tracks. "He didn't think greyhound racing was inhumane when he was making millions from it," Byrnes said of Adkins.

Adkins said he does not consider the racing itself to be cruel. But as the money dries up, he said, it's fair to ask whether kennels can still afford to provide the dogs with proper care. In the op-ed, he cited the case of a kennel that falsified vaccination records to cut expenses.

"When we were making millions of dollars, they were making millions of dollars," Adkins said of the kennels. "Now I wonder how they're paying for it."

West Virginia racing opponents say they plan to introduce a decoupling bill in the coming legislative session, and both sides wonder what role will be played by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin, a Democrat. His family owns Tomblin Kennel, a major player on both state tracks. His mother, Freda Tomblin, is one of the state's best-known greyhound breeders. Racing foes assume the governor will work to derail the legislation. But those in the industry point out that Tomblin has supported cutting the greyhound subsidy in the past.

"We don't expect the governor to be our savior by any means," Burdette said.

And there may not be one. In Florida, where 12 tracks operate mostly in conjunction with poker halls, Adkins sees no future at all for dog racing. He will close the Hollywood track if the law is changed to allow it, he said.

But in West Virginia, he thinks at least one track might survive if the yearlong racing schedule were reduced to a few months. Survive, at least for a while.

"I think it's going to come to an end ultimately," Adkins said. "It just seems there is not much interest left."



BONNIE JO MOUNT/The Washington Post

Greyhounds race against each other at Wheeling Island Racetrack in West Virginia. The greyhound racing industry is under threat as the popularity of the sport has plummeted.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Some hospitals bill rape victims for tests, care

LA NEW ORLEANS — Hospitals should not be billing rape victims for forensic medical evaluations and care, state legislators and others say.

They responded to a report by NOLA.com and The Times-Picayune report that some victims are getting billed \$1,700 to \$4,000 even though state and federal guidelines require many of the services to be free for victims. Practices vary widely among hospitals and parishes, it said.

"I had no idea that was happening," said state Rep. Helena Moreno, D-New Orleans. "Talk about being traumatized twice."

A state Department of Health and Hospitals statement said officials will work with the Legislature to change things.

Dozens of animals dead in house fire

NV NORTH LAS VEGAS — Firefighters say dozens of animals were killed and injured in a fire at a North Las Vegas home.

Capt. Cedric Williams said the owner reported there were 90 to 100 animals in the home. Officials estimated Sunday night that about 30 dogs had died, but Williams said those numbers may have changed.

Court won't hear appeal in lover-in-closet case

TN NASHVILLE — The Tennessee Supreme Court has declined to hear the appeal of a woman who was convicted, along with her lover, in the slaying of her husband.

Martha Freeman and Rafael Rocha-Perez in 2006 were sentenced to life in the death of businessman Jeffrey Freeman, who was strangled and beaten in April 2005 at the Freemans' Nashville home. Prosecutors said Rocha-Perez had been living in a bedroom closet in the couple's home, apparently without the husband's knowledge.

The defense argued at trial that although Freeman waited a day to call the police, the fact that she didn't cover up the crime scene showed she wasn't involved.

Hiker trapped in canyon by floodwaters dies

UT SALT LAKE CITY — A Southern California man was found dead over the weekend in Zion National Park after rising floodwaters trapped him in a narrow canyon that is home to one of the park's best-known hiking trails.

Douglas Yoshi Vo, 34, of Westminster, Calif., and his friend began hiking early Saturday when rains came and the river began rising rapidly, forcing them to seek refuge on high ground. They ended up on opposite sides of the raging river and could not talk to one another because of the noise of the water, Eaker said.

Vo's friend swam the flooding river to safety, while Vo remained where he was, Eaker said. Rangers found Vo's body Sunday after flooding subsided.

THE CENSUS

\$390K

The amount of a state lottery prize claimed by a Massachusetts man just hours before it would have disappeared forever. Dennis Cote, of Ware, Mass., purchased the "Lucky for Life" ticket Sept. 26, 2103, but didn't claim the winnings until last week. Under lottery rules, winners have one year to claim their prize. Cote told lottery officials he discovered that he had a winning ticket several months ago, but he wanted to do a little financial planning first and said he was just too busy to make the long trek to the lottery headquarters.



DAN PELLE, THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW (SPOKANE, WASH.)/AP

A prehistoric point of view

Thor Tenold, 5, right, looks through a Tyrannosaurus rex interactive exhibit, as his sister Ada, 3, peeks through a triceratops head, as they get a dinosaur's point of view while visiting the T. Rex Named Sue exhibit on Tuesday at Mobius Science Center in downtown Spokane, Wash.

Navy: Aircraft carrier helps rescue fishermen

VA NORFOLK — The Navy says a Virginia-based aircraft carrier helped rescue two fishermen off the coast of Florida.

The Navy said the fishermen took to their life raft after unsuccessfully fighting an electrical fire aboard their vessel.

The Navy said the USS Theodore Roosevelt assisted Naval Air Warfare Center vessel 38 with the rescue about 90 miles off the coast of Florida on Monday.

2 teens cause more than \$100K in damage

WI BABCOCK — Wood County authorities say a vandalism spree that forced Ocean Spray's Babcock receiving station to close down for the weekend and divert deliveries caused \$200,000 in damages and lost wages.

Two 14-year-old Babcock-area boys broke vending machines, smashed windows and overturned a pickup truck at the receiving station last Wednesday night. Daily Tribune Media reported the pair also ransacked a local cafe and residence. The Wood County Sheriff's Department initially estimated all of the damage was well over \$100,000.

Wolf, coyote hunting derby wants larger area

ID BOISE — A group that overcame a court challenge last winter to hold a wolf and coyote-shooting derby is seeking a permit from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to roughly double the area for a second event this winter.

"There's no excuse for not allowing us to hunt," said Steve Alder of Idaho for Wildlife. "It's on federal land. If we didn't have a derby, people are allowed to

hunt it anyway."

The BLM said a permit is required because a derby is considered a competitive event with prizes. Last year the hunting group offered two separate, \$1,000 prizes. This winter's event is expected to draw about 100 to 150 hunters.

District to pay cancer bracelet lawsuit fees

PA EASTON — An eastern Pennsylvania school district has agreed to pay \$385,000 in attorneys' fees in the lawsuit over its efforts to bar students from wearing bracelets to promote breast cancer awareness.

The suit was filed in 2010 after two Easton Area School District middle school girls were suspended after refusing a principal's order to take off the "I (heart) Boobies!" bracelets.

The U.S. Supreme Court in March turned down the district's appeal, leaving in place last year's

federal appeals court ruling that the bracelets were not "plainly lewd" and hadn't caused any disruption.

Falcon has eye surgery, gets new set of lenses

NH CONCORD — A falcon in New Hampshire has undergone eye surgery to remove cataracts and has received new synthetic lenses.

Banner, a 4-year-old falcon, lost its sight and hasn't been able to fly or hunt for the past two years. On Monday, a team at Capital Veterinary Emergency Services in Concord removed the cataracts and put in artificial lenses in the hour-long procedure.

Banner's owners, Nancy and Jim Cowan of the New Hampshire School of Falconry in Deering, say it's the first time this surgery has been done on a falcon.

From wire reports

FAITH

REMAKING Mecca

Between wealth and Wahhabism, Saudi urban overhaul transforms Islam's holiest city

By AYA BATRAWY
The Associated Press

MECCA, Saudi Arabia — As a child, Osama al-Bar would walk from his home past Islam's holiest site, the Kaaba, to the market of spice and fabric merchants where his father owned a store. At that time, Mecca was so small, pilgrims could sit at the cube-shaped Kaaba and look out at the serene desert mountains where the Prophet Muhammad once walked.

Now the market and the homes are gone. Monumental luxury hotel towers crowd around the Grand Mosque where the Kaaba is located, dwarfing it. Steep rocky hills overlooking the mosque have been leveled and are now covered with cranes building more towers in row after row.

"My father and all the people who lived in Mecca wouldn't recognize it," said al-Bar, who is now Mecca's mayor.

As Muslims from around the world stream into Mecca for the annual hajj pilgrimage this week, they come to a city undergoing the biggest transformation in its history.

Decades ago, this was a low-built city of centuries-old neighborhoods. Over the years, it saw piecemeal renewal projects. But in the mid-2000s, the kingdom launched its most ambitious overhaul ever with a series of mega-projects that, though incomplete, have already reshaped Mecca.

Old neighborhoods have been erased for hotel towers and malls built right up to the edge of the Grand Mosque. Historic sites significant for Islam have been demolished. Next to the Kaaba soars the world's third tallest skyscraper, topped by a gigantic clock, which is splashed with colored lights at night.

"It's not Mecca. It's Mecca-hattan. This tower and the lights in it are like Vegas," said Sami Angawi, an architect who spent his life studying hajj and is one of the most outspoken critics of the changes. "The truth of the history of Mecca is wiped out ... with bulldozers and dynamite. Is this development?"

Critics complain the result is stripping the holy city of its spirituality. They also say it is robbing the hajj of its more 1,400-year-old message that all Muslims, rich or poor, are equal before God as they perform the rites meant to cleanse them of sin, starting and ending by circling the Kaaba seven times.

Mecca is revered by hundreds of millions of Muslims worldwide. They face the Kaaba every



The center of Mecca and the Kaaba in the middle of the square on Sept. 23, 1951.



Thousands of Muslims perform the Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca on Sept. 24, 1951.



Muslims visit the Kaaba, the Sacred House of Allah, during their pilgrimage in 1954.

day in their prayers. The Grand Mosque is one of the few places in the world where Muslims of all stripes gather — Sunnis and Shiites, secular Muslims, mystics and hard-liners.

Overseeing Mecca is also a key source of prestige for Saudi Arabia's monarchy. The past two kings — the current one, Abdullah, and his predecessor, Fahd — have adopted the further title of "custodian of the two holy mosques" to boost their status, referring to Mecca's Grand Mosque and Muhammad's mosque in nearby Medina.

Now the city is being molded to a particularly Saudi vision that bolsters the rule of the Al Saud

royal family.

Two forces shape that vision. One is raw, petrodollar-fueled capitalism. Mecca's planners are largely catering to wealthier pilgrims by focusing on construction of five-star hotels, surrounding the Kaaba in marble-sheathed luxury. Nearby pilgrims can shop at international chains, including a Paris Hilton store and a gender-segregated Starbucks.

The other force is Wahhabism, the strict, puritanical interpretation of Islam that the Al Saud rulers elevated to the country's official doctrine. In return, Wahhabi clerics staunchly back the monarchy. The monarchy has long given Wahhabi clerics a monopoly of preaching at the Kaaba.

One tenet of Wahhabism is that Muslim tombs or sites connected to revered figures — even the Prophet Muhammad, his family and companions — should be destroyed to avoid veneration of anything other than God. It's the same iconoclastic zeal that has prompted militants from the Islamic State group to blow up Muslim shrines in Iraq and Syria.

In Mecca, hardly any site associated with Muhammad remains. Many were destroyed in previous expansions of the Grand Mosque in the 1980s and 1990s, and the new development is finishing off much of what remains. In 2008, for example, the house of Abu Bakr, Muhammad's successor as leader of the Muslim community, was razed to make way for a Hilton.

The country's top religious official, Grand Mufti Abdul-Aziz Al-Sheik, backed such demolitions last year, saying "the removal of such things within the expansion is necessary."

The urban renewal is necessary, Saudi officials say, to accommodate hajj pilgrims whose numbers are expected to swell from around 3 million currently to nearly 7 million by 2040.

Essam Kalthoum, managing director of the government-owned Bawabat Makkah Company, which is involved in a number of projects around the city, acknowledged that "it would be a farce" to say financial motivations are not coming into play.

But he said the main goal is to increase space for pilgrims. Kalthoum showed a gift from a Turkish foundation he had just received: a photo of Mecca from the late 1800s.

"This is painful," he said. "For those of us who witnessed some of this (past), it brings back memories." But he pointed to the Kaaba in the photograph. "Because of this place," he said, the old markets and buildings had to go.



FACES

Fresh break

Emmy winner Anna Gunn steps into new role on series 'Gracepoint'

By LYNN ELBER
The Associated Press

The average TV binge viewer is indulging in catch-up. When Anna Gunn dove headlong into the British crime drama "Broadchurch," it was homework. Gunn stars as police Detective Ellie Miller in Fox's "Gracepoint," an adaptation of the moodily gripping U.K. series that's been uprooted from a seaside English town to a northern California one that's more scenic but no less fraught with pain.

The actress, who won two Emmy Awards for "Breaking Bad," is part of the makeover, one that stopped short of swapping out leading man David Tennant as a tough but troubled police detective.

Gunn, 46, said she felt "head over heels" for the emotionally layered drama about a boy's murder and the distrust and anger it unleashes in a placid community. She did fret about how Tennant would respond to her replacing "Broadchurch" star Olivia Coleman as his mismatched police partner. (Tennant and Coleman are paired again in season two of "Broadchurch.")

"At the very beginning I said, 'Do you feel you're cheating? Does it feel odd to you?'" Gunn recalled. "He said, 'It really doesn't. It feels like a whole new thing.'"

That's how its executive producers, including Anya Epstein, looked at Fox's remake of "Broadchurch." It re-

ceived a prestigious Peabody Award, but the nearly 1 million average weekly viewers that watched it on BBC America means most U.S. viewers are unfamiliar with the "amazing" series, Epstein said.

That includes her parents, she said, who stopped watching because they couldn't decipher Tennant's Scottish brogue.

That's not a problem in "Gracepoint," in which the former "Doctor Who" star employs an American accent. His character, renamed Emmett Carver, is no less prickly than the original, and Gunn's Miller has to cope with him and her first murder case.

Her inexperience and roots in the community are reason enough for her to cede authority to town newcomer Carver. But as embodied by the imposingly tall and charismatic Gunn, Miller appears ready to stand her ground.

"He's someone who approaches the world with a wary eye," Gunn said of Carver. "She's someone who approaches it with quite a bit of openness and the belief that you protect and serve, and also give people the benefit of the doubt until they prove you wrong."

As the 10-episode series progresses — taking different plot turns than the eight-episode BBC original and giving some characters more weight — so does Gunn's portrayal, Epstein said. "As things unfold, the fragility becomes more and more apparent," the producer said.

That's in contrast to Gunn's previous character who, granted, was in far different circumstances: Skylar White of "Breaking Bad" steered herself to pull her family away from her meth-making husband as he descended further into evil and danger.

It was a rewarding role for Gunn but one that became a harsh introduction to the Internet's potential for unrestrained viciousness. Skylar was condemned in some online posts for being a failed, unsupportive wife, and Gunn became a target simply for playing her.

The actress responded in an eloquent New York Times op-ed piece last year. "Male characters don't seem to inspire this kind of public venting and vitriol," she wrote, adding that the comments shed light on attitudes toward gender and the "dark and murky corners" ignored in everyday life.

Anna Gunn — familiar to audiences for her work on "Breaking Bad" — stars as Detective Ellie Miller on the TV drama "Gracepoint." It starts Saturday on AFN-Spectrum.

Adam Sandler signs exclusive 4-movie deal with Netflix

From wire reports

Movie star and comedian Adam Sandler announced Wednesday night that he signed an exclusive four-picture deal with Netflix.

Sandler announced the deal on his verified Twitter account.

"I tried to sign up for Netflix but this happened instead," Sandler tweeted.

Netflix sent out an announcement shortly afterward.

"Under the deal announced today, Sandler's Happy Madison Productions will work alongside Netflix to develop the four films and to premiere them exclusively to members in the nearly 50 countries where Netflix operates,"

Netflix said. "Current studio film commitments are not included in this deal."

Fans of the former "Saturday Night Live" cast member can't get enough of his work, Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos said in a statement.

"People love Adam's films on Netflix and often watch them again and again. His appeal spans across viewers of all ages — everyone has a favorite movie, everyone has a favorite line — not just in the U.S. but all over the world," Sarandos said.

Sandler, jokingly, said the deal was simple.

"When these fine people came

to me with an offer to make four movies for them, I immediately said yes for one reason and one reason only. Netflix rhymes with wet chicks." Sandler said in a statement. "Let the streaming begin!"

Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Bennett sets mark as oldest act with No. 1 LP

Even at age 88, Tony Bennett is still reaching No. 1 on the charts.

The singer is once again the oldest performer with a No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 for "Cheek to Cheek," his jazz duets

collaboration with Lady Gaga.

"Cheek to Cheek" sold more than 131,000 copies since its release last week, according to Nielsen SoundScan, edging ahead of new albums by Kenny Chesney and Barbra Streisand. The placement gives Bennett his second No. 1 overall and Gaga her third consecutive No. 1 album.

Bennett established the previous record of 85 years old with the 2011 release of "Duets II."

"Cheek to Cheek" also landed at No. 1 on the jazz albums and traditional jazz album charts.

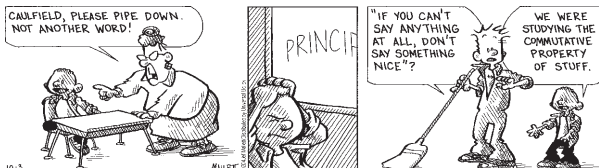
Other news

■ A federal judge in California

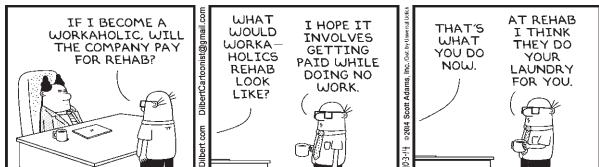
on Tuesday dismissed a lawsuit that John Wayne Enterprises filed against Duke University in North Carolina. The two have squabbled since 2005 over use of the name. The university objected last year when Wayne's heirs tried to register the name "Duke" to market bourbon and other alcoholic beverages.

■ A council in southern England said it instructed its workers to remove a mural before realizing it was the work of internationally famous graffiti artist Banksy. The mural, which featured a group of pigeons carrying anti-immigration banners, appeared at Clacton-on-Sea.

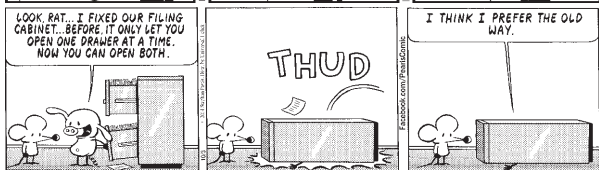
Frazz



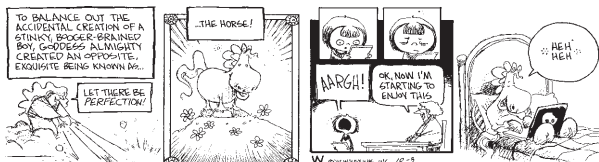
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



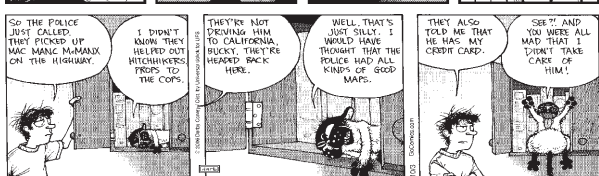
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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15						16			17	
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44				45				46		
47				48			49		50	51
52				53				54		
55				56				57		

ACROSS

- 1 Starbucks option
- 6 Delivery vehicle
- 9 Energy
- 12 Herd
- 13 Judge Lance
- 14 Lemieux milieu
- 15 Doctrine
- 16 Hold the reins
- 18 Catch in a lie
- 20 Mysterious character
- 21 Commotion
- 23 Author Brown
- 24 Old-hat
- 25 Consomme, e.g.
- 27 Tested the waters
- 29 Tranquil
- 31 Cars that have seen better days
- 35 Sill
- 37 Accomplishes
- 38 Hand out
- 41 Sprite
- 43 "Science Guy" Bill
- 44 Sea eagle
- 45 Sign up
- 47 Environment
- 49 —foot oil
- 52 Praise in verse
- 53 Crony

DOWN

- 1 Banned bug spray
- 2 Before
- 3 Outline
- 4 State firmly
- 5 Stinky
- 6 Alpaca cousin
- 7 On
- 8 French refusal
- 9 PC woe
- 10 PC pictures
- 11 Donnybrook
- 17 Swapped
- 19 Manhandled
- 21 Fool
- 22 Buck's mate
- 24 Apiece
- 26 BB, e.g.
- 28 Reside
- 30 Profit
- 32 Hold
- 33 Crucial
- 34 Compass dir.
- 36 With TLC
- 38 Interior design-er's concern
- 39 Wear away
- 40 Wing
- 42 Last
- 45 Physical
- 46 Big rig
- 48 Ecol. org.
- 50 Stick with a kick
- 51 Sauce source

Answer to Previous Puzzle

L	A	R	A	S	A	Y	P	L	O	Y
A	L	O	T	E	G	O	A	U	R	A
S	I	L	T	M	E	G	S	M	E	W
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L	A	N	C	E	R		N	O	T	I
E	S	A	U	O	V	A	I	D	O	L
A	I	R	S	O	E	R	V	E	T	S
F	A	Y	E	F	E	Y	E	A	S	E

10-3

CRYPTOQUIP

FU SNT LFEFSPZQ, OJ PUQ

ZTBZKFSG SNPS NJRT SJ

XTBILT REKLXTZG MJ

SNZJKMN XPGFB OZPFUFUM?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF HE'S BEING REALLY GOOD AT SUBTLE PERSUASION, I'D SAY THE PIANO SELLER USES THE SOFT PEDDLE.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: S equals T

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OPINION

US will 'meet the tests of this moment'

By President Barack Obama

American leadership is the one constant in an uncertain world. As Americans, we see the future not as something beyond our control, but as something we can shape for the better through concerted and collective effort. That was true this week, as we mobilized the world to confront some of our most urgent challenges.

America is leading the world in the fight to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as the Islamic State. This group has terrorized all who they come across in Iraq and Syria. In the most horrific crimes imaginable, innocent human beings have been beheaded, with videos of the atrocity distributed to shock the conscience of the world. There can be no reason, no negotiation, with this brand of evil. The only language understood by killers like this is the language of force.

In this effort, we do not act alone. Nor do we intend to send American troops to occupy foreign lands. Instead, we will support Iraqis and Syrians fighting to reclaim their communities. We will use our military might in conjunction of airstrikes to roll back the Islamic State, and we will be joined by friends and partners, including Arab nations. We will train and equip forces fighting against these terrorists on the ground. We will work to cut off their financing, and to stop the flow of fighters into and out of the region. Already, over 40 nations have offered to join the coalition against the Islamic State, and at the United Nations in New York, I worked to build more support for this coalition.

There is no nation on Earth better positioned to seize the future than ours.

In my annual address to the U.N., I also challenged the world — especially Muslim communities — to explicitly, forcefully and consistently reject the ideology of al-Qaida and the Islamic State. No children, anywhere, should be educated to hate other people. We must cut off the funding that fuels violent hatred, and contest the space that terrorists occupy, including the Internet and social media. At the same time, countries must do more to offer an alternative vision, and to tap the extraordinary potential of their young people.

American leadership is not confined to the fight against the Islamic State. We are leading the effort to rally the world against Russian aggression in Ukraine. Along with our allies, we will support the people of Ukraine as they develop their democracy and economy. We will reinforce our NATO allies, and uphold our commitment to collective defense. We will impose a cost on Russia for aggression, and counter falsehoods with the truth. And this week, I called upon even more nations to join us on the right side of history.

America is leading the fight to contain and combat the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. We're deploying our doctors and scientists — supported by our military — to help fight the outbreak and pursue new treatments. From the United Kingdom and Germany to Senegal and France, other na-

tions are stepping up their efforts, too, by sending money, supplies and personnel. But we need an even broader effort to stop a disease that could kill hundreds of thousands, inflict horrific suffering, destabilize economies, and ultimately spread across borders. That's why we will continue to rally other countries to join us in making concrete commitments to fight this disease, and enhance global health security for the long term.

America is engaging more allies and partners to confront the growing threat of climate change before it's too late. At home, we've taken historic steps to invest in clean energy, cut carbon pollution, and create new jobs in the process. Abroad, our climate assistance now reaches more than 120 nations. But we can only succeed in combating climate change if we are joined in this effort by every major power. So on Tuesday, I called on every nation — developed and developing alike — to join us in this effort for the sake of future generations.

America will do what it takes to meet the tests of this moment. Because despite all the challenges of this new century, there is no nation on Earth better positioned to seize the future than ours. The people of the world still look to us to lead. And we welcome that responsibility. We are heirs to a proud legacy of freedom, and as we showed the world this week, we are prepared to do what is necessary to secure that legacy for generations to come.

Hong Kong's protests probably aren't contagious

By ADAM MINTER

Bloomberg News

A re Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests contagious? The Chinese government, never one to take chances with such things, certainly isn't doing so now in dealing with the Umbrella Revolution. Since demonstrations began to swell this past weekend, mainland authorities have clamped down on any references to Hong Kong in social media. A social media site for the last major foreign social media service to have an uncensored presence in China, and strictly regulated what mainstream news sites could say about events in the Chinese-ruled city. Yet despite these efforts, plenty of protest news seems to be leaking through.

The proof is in the censorship itself. According to Weibo, a social-media analysis site at the University of Hong Kong, 452 out of every 10,000 posts to the Sina Weibo social media site were deleted on Sunday, when Hong Kong police used tear gas and pepper spray on protesters. That's roughly five times the preceding week's average, and double that which occurred during this year's 25th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Many if not most of the deleted posts maintained at Weibo scope expressed admiration for protesters.

But the Weibo scope archive is hardly comprehensive, and the range of emotions that Chinese feel toward Hong Kong is much broader than a cache of admiring

tweets. Indeed, relations between mainlanders and Hong Kong Chinese have been tense and complicated for several years now. In early 2012, Apple Daily — the city's most widely pro-democratic newspaper — ran an advertisement referring to the city's mainland visitors as locusts who were taking up space in the city's maternity wards. The ensuing culture war has barely flagged since, with mainlanders firing their own salvos at Hong Kongers for being insufficiently loyal to a shared Chinese destiny.

The divisions are deep and widening and yet curiously — there's a very little overt sign of these resentments in censored or uncensored social media. Consider an odd Monday afternoon post to Sina Weibo by Exercise Book, the pseudonym for one of the site's more popular users (with 8.5 million followers). In it, he invokes Hong Kong's well-known role as the epicenter of an iPhone 5 gray market catering mostly to Apple-crazed mainlanders. (The new iPhones won't go on sale in China until Oct. 17 due to licensing issues.) "Treat Hong Kong a little better," he wrote. "Everyone still wants to go there and buy the iPhone."

This isn't the sort of thing that would go viral outside of China. But inside the country, it's been reposted more than 6,500 times and generated more than 6,000 comments. For many, it's a comic (yes, comic — the comment thread is filled with laughing emotes) reminder that Chinese society is so thoroughly controlled by the

government that people must travel to Hong Kong for something as simple as a smartphone. For others — especially the censors who have allowed the post to stay up — it's something else: a backhanded reminder of the value that Hong Kong brings to China. And for many commentators, the post is an easy target for quick jibes like: "It's Hong Kong that should be treating the Mainland better."

What really emerges from Exercise Book's thread, and the deleted posts stored at Weibo scope, is simple curiosity: China's online communities are anxious to know more about what's happening in Hong Kong than what censors will allow. So, often, are made to share images and news stories; links are passed around. For those who seek it, a narrative about what's happening in Hong Kong slowly emerges.

Of course, if you go looking among the deleted posts or the extant comment threads on Sina Weibo, it's all but impossible to find anyone even hinting that such information should be used to foment umbrella revolutions on the mainland. Indeed, the most striking characteristic of even supportive posts is how the "praise" and "blessings" users are sending to Hong Kong sound like the sort of good wishes that one might bestow on a foreign country rather than one's own. For the regime at least, that's one unexpected benefit of the troubling divisions that have grown between the mainland and Hong Kong over the last several years.

Adam Minter is based in Asia, where he covers politics, culture, business and junk.

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OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

What to do with Ebola in US The Modesto (Calif.) Bee

On Sept. 2, seven Northeastern University scientists wrote an academic paper published by the Public Library of Science predicting Ebola could reach the United States by "the end of the month."

Last week, The Washington Post reported that it was only a quirk of timing that kept an American doctor in Africa long enough to realize he had the disease before returning home. Otherwise, Ebola already would have arrived in the doctor's hometown, Dallas. The Post wondered if the "resulting panic" would be "impossible to contain" once the word got out that there was "Ebola in Texas."

The Northwestern academic paper proved prophetic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed Tuesday the first person infected with Ebola who had not been brought to the United States for treatment has, in fact, turned up in Dallas. We'll find out shortly if there will be any "panic." The CDC said the man flew to Texas from Liberia on Sept. 20 and exhibited symptoms Sept. 24 before seeking care two days later.

Those in America, those words don't take your breath away, you're hardly breathing. The disease is ravaging West Africa and experts have been screaming from the rooftops — and even the podium at the United Nations — that the world was not paying enough attention to a disease that has been doubling in scale every three weeks. We knew it was true. These prescient computer modelers from Northeastern said that even if air travel out of Africa had been restricted by 80 percent, it would have delayed the spread by only three to four weeks. ...

What next? Quarantine Texas? Hardly. It's time for a deep breath while insisting that our leaders are sufficiently concerned to take emergency action. Remember, this is only one case, and the nation's top doctor sounded the perfect note as he addressed it: "There is no doubt in my mind that we will stop it," Dr. Tom Frieden, head of the CDC, told the ABC affiliate in Dallas. "This is not Africa. We have great infrastructure to deal with an outbreak."

We have some unexpected experience, too. Ebola, like AIDS, is transmitted through bodily fluids. So the key to staying safe from Ebola is to have no contact with the bodily fluids of others.

Still, there's plenty of cause for concern. First, Ebola takes up to 10 days to manifest and death follows shortly in 70 percent of African cases. In nations with better health care it is likely to be a lower percentage, but no one knows for how long. Second, Ebola might be capable of mutation, which could make it harder to stop. So the key to stopping it is arresting the spread early — which is what doctors are trying to do in Texas. ...

If they really want to show us how effective they can be, Congress can put together an emergency plan and help the CDC and doctors on the ground get started on a cure. There's no time to waste. Ebola has arrived.

Holder exit sets up battle royal The Dallas Morning News

Attorney General Eric Holder has been a divisive figure in office. His departure promises to be no less divisive.

Holder, an original member of the president's Cabinet, was a lightning rod for



liberals who questioned his record on national security and his indifference toward prosecuting Wall Street executives after the financial meltdown. Conservatives saw him as an obstructionist, most notably for his actions in Fast and Furious, the Justice Department's failed gun-running sting that led GOP lawmakers to hold him in contempt of Congress. And while Holder promptly backed more progressive drug laws, same-sex marriage and voting rights protections and spoke eloquently on issues of race and sentencing, he also crossed the line in using the power of his office to impede journalists and to discourage leaks critical of the administration.

It is in this charged environment that Holder steps aside, leaving an unclear path for his successor. Democrats have two options on how to time the confirmation proceedings. They could push for the lame-duck session after the midterms, while Democrats are sure to be in control of the Senate. Or they could wait until next year; the GOP might control the Senate, and Democrats would just dare them to create a showdown over an attorney general nominee.

Texas Republican Sens. Ted Cruz and John Cornyn have both said they don't want outgoing Democratic senators to accelerate a vote on Holder's replacement before year-end. "There is so much ill will already that this will poison the well even further," Cornyn told The Dallas Morning News' editorial board Monday.

Both scenarios are highly political and reflect the bitter partnership of Washington. ...

Once the White House settles on a nominee, it normally could count on receiving background checks from the FBI and Senate Judiciary Committee and a Senate confirmation within two months. But these are not normal times. The upcoming elections and the snail's pace of other confirmation hearings signal that this process is going to get ugly. That is what happens when the politicians on both sides use the office of the nation's top law enforcement officer as a political chit.

Then again, Holder has done his successor no favors. He or she has been left to dangle like a political pinata, making it almost impossible to have the independence from politics that the office demands.

Student loan load a risk to all The Orange County (Calif.) Register

When we read the remarks Monday by Deputy Treasury Secretary Sarah Bloom Raskin, concerning the nation's record level of student loan debt, we were reminded of comments made in 2007 by Ben Bernanke, then the chairman of the Federal Reserve, concerning the nation's subprime mortgage crisis.

In a keynote speech at the annual meeting of the National Association of Business

Economics, Raskin assured attendees, "No one now expects a student loan meltdown because there is a great deal of integrity and stability in the student loan market."

That sounds to us very much like Bernanke's testimony to Congress seven years ago, when he assured lawmakers that "the impact on the broader economy and financial markets of the problems in the subprime market seems likely to be contained."

Well we know now that the subprime crisis was far from contained. In fact, it precipitated the collapse of the nation's housing sector that, in turn, mushroomed into the nation's worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

We don't think that student-loan crisis will lay waste to the higher-education sector as the subprime-loan crisis did to housing, but we do not rule out the possibility of something just short of a student-loan meltdown.

Indeed, student loan debt has more than doubled since 2007, from \$500 billion to roughly \$1.1 trillion. The class of 2014 graduated college with an average \$33,000 in debt. Many of those freshly minted graduates did not find jobs with yearly salaries greater than their total debt, a rule of thumb for indebted graduates.

What worries that the mismatch between student borrowing and post-graduation earnings appears to be getting greater, rather than smaller.

Indeed, from 2005-12, average student loan debt for borrowers in their 20s increased 35 percent, while the median earnings for 25-to-34-year-olds with undergraduate degrees actually declined 2.2 percent.

That explains, at least in part, why almost 7 million erstwhile collegians defaulted on their student loans last year.

The student-loan crisis has no easy fix. But at least part of the solution is reining in the runaway cost of higher education that has made loans so necessary for 70 percent of college students.

New era at Secret Service? The Washington Post

Homeland Security Secretary John Johnson wasted no time Wednesday in accepting Julia Pierson's resignation as director of the Secret Service. It had become clear, following her poor performance 24 hours earlier at a Capitol Hill hearing and the alarming revelation of a new security breach that allowed an armed felon to get close to the president, that there was no support for her leadership.

Even more important were Johnson's recognition that the agency's problems likely go much deeper than who is at its top and his decision to order an independent review. The string of troubling events in which White House security was

breached, protocols were ignored and the president apparently was kept out of the loop demands serious attention and action. Johnson's swift and decisive steps were reassuring.

With calls mounting from both parties for Pierson's departure, Johnson issued a no-nonsense statement announcing her resignation. He saluted her 30 years of public service and named Joseph Clancy, formerly special agent in charge of the presidential protective division of the Secret Service, to be interim acting director. Investigation of the Sept. 19 incident in which a man was able to get into the White House will be taken over by the Department of Homeland Security, and a panel of independent experts will be convened to look at issues relating to the Secret Service.

The need for this broader look is underscored by the fact that it was only 18 months ago that Pierson was brought in as director to help remake an agency tarnished by a scandal involving agents allegedly drinking and consorting with prostitutes while on overseas trips. Pierson established new rules, but her tenure was undone by the even more serious concern that agents were not up to the job of protecting the president and his family. In addition to the Sept. 19 incident, there were revelations of a fumbled investigation of a 2010 security attack on the White House; the last straw was the report of an armed contractor with a criminal record who was allowed to ride in an elevator with the president during a Sept. 16 trip to Atlanta.

There is no question, as Johnson noted in his statement, that the Secret Service is composed of men and women willing to put their lives on the line to protect others. The dedication of its staff is another reason why it is important to quickly identify and address the root problems that have come to bedevil the agency.

Grain of salt with e-cig warning Newsday

Big Tobacco might have been scarred straight.

Companies such as Reynolds American Inc. and Altria Group Inc. have voluntarily put some of the strongest health warnings in the industry on their entries in the fledgling e-cigarette market.

That's a startling about-face for an industry that for decades used smoke screens to deny the horribly addictive nature of nicotine and the ill effects of tobacco despite having evidence to the contrary. The fight ended in 1998 when the four largest domestic tobacco companies agreed to pay more than \$200 billion over 25 years to settle suits by 46 attorneys general over Medicaid costs to treat smoking-related diseases.

Altria Group, the maker of Marlboro, sells Mylet e-cigarettes with labels that flatly say, "Nicotine is addictive and habit forming, and it is very toxic." Altria warns against use "by children, women who are pregnant or breast feeding or persons with or at risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, or taking medicine for depression or asthma." Reynolds America, maker of Camel cigarettes, includes a similar warning on its Vuse e-cigarette packaging.

The companies might simply want to be honest about potential health hazards, but it's hard not to be skeptical. The aggressive, voluntary labeling just might be a strategy to insulate the companies against costly future lawsuits, or to curry favor with regulators.

Whatever the motivation, the warnings are important for consumers of a product that delivers nicotine or other chemicals for inhalation before regulators can assess the health risks and impose labeling standards. Smaller companies selling e-cigarettes should follow Big Tobacco's lead. What e-cig users don't know could hurt them.

SCOREBOARD

Sports
on AFN

Go to the American Forces
Network website for the most up-
to-date TV schedules.
myafn.net

Tennis

China Open

Wednesday

At The National Tennis Center
Beijing
Purse: Men's doubles (WT500)
Women, \$54.5 million (Premier)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles

Men

Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, def. Vasek
Pospisil, Canada, 6-3, 7-6
John Isner (8), United States, def. Tomas
Rothman, Spain, 6-7, 7-6 (4).

Women

Petra Kvitová (3), Czech Republic, def.
Peng Shuai (4), China, 6-4, 6-2
Samantha Stosur, Australia, def. Caroline
Wozniacki (6), Denmark, 6-4, 7-6 (9)

Alize Cornet, France, def. Lauren Davis,
United States, 6-2, 6-1.

Third Round

Maria Sharapova (2), Russia, def. Carla
Suarez Navarro, Spain, 6-1, 7-6 (3).

Doubles

Cara Black, Zimbabwe, and Sania Mirza,
India, def. Gabriela Dabrowski, Austria,
and Lucie Hradecka, Czech Republic, 6-3,
6-4.

Japan Open

Wednesday

At Ariake Arena, Tokyo
Purse: \$1.5 million (WT500)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles

First Round

Kei Nishikori (4), Japan, def. Ivan
Dodig, Croatia, 6-4, 6-3

Second Round

Benjamin Becker, Germany, def. Tatsuma
Ito, Japan, 6-3, 6-3
Steve Johnson, United States, def. Marcel
Granollers, Spain, 6-4, 6-3

Jack Sock, United States, def. Andrey
Golubev, Russia, 6-4, 6-3
Gilles Simon, France, def. Gilles Muller,
Luxembourg, 6-4, 6-3

Doubles

Pierre-Hugues Herbert, France, and
Michal Przysietny, Poland, def. Bob
and Kateryna Kalinina, United States, 6-4,
6-3

Sanja Dodig, Croatia, and Marcello Meo-
ni, Brazil, def. Daniele Bracciali, Italy,
and David Roger Vasselin, France, 7-6
(2), 6-4

Eric Butorac, United States, and Raven
Knapik, South Africa, def. Romain
Arneodo, Britain, and Florin Mergea, Ro-
mania, 6-4, 6-3

Rohan Bopanna and Leander Paes,
India, def. Tatsuma Ito and Go Soeda, Ja-
pan, 6-1, 7-6 (7)

Deals

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS MINERS — Signed
RHP Brian Bierlein and OF Jon Minicucci.

National Football League

NFL — Signed QB Matt Ryan, Frank
Alexander an additional 10 games after
contracting the league's substance abuse
policy again.

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Re-signed LB
Deshaun Watson.

CHICAGO BEARS — Signed CB Teddy
Williams. Arizona's practice squad se-
lected LB Terrell Manning.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League — D Jyrki
Jokipainen and RW Brett Ritchie to Texas
(AHL).

NEW YORK RANGERS — Reassigned
Conor Allen, Matt Bodie, Chris Bourque,
Dustin Cook, and defenseman, Johnny
Kristo, Jason Miesnick, Nick Tarnashko.

WINNIPEG JEES — Assigned F John Al-
bert to AHL's Manitoba Moose. Center
Ilya Bryzgalov, F Carl Klingberg and F JC
Potvin to St. John's IceCaps.

FC Dallas — Signed MF Alejandro Ze-
nades.

College football

Schedule

Friday, Oct. 3

EAST

Lafayette (2-2) at North Carolina (4-1)
Louisville (4-1) at Syracuse (2-2)

FAR WEST

San Diego St. (2-2) at Fresno St. (2-3)
Utah St. (2-3) at Utah (1-4)

Saturday, Oct. 4

EAST

Ball St. (1-4) at Army (1-3)
Harvard (2-0) at Georgetown (2-3)
Princeton (1-1) at Cornell (0-2)
Ivy League (2-2) at Cornell (0-2)
Yale (2-0) at Cornell (0-2)
Wake Forest (2-2) at Duke (2-2)
Brown (2-0) at Rhode Island (0-4)
Penn (0-2) at Dartmouth (0-3)
Monmouth (NJ) (3-1) at Robert Morris

Stony Brook (4-1) at Towson (2-3)
Sacred Heart (2-1) at Delaware (3-1)
Kansas (2-2) at West Virginia (2-2)
James Madison (2-2) at Albany (NY)
Rochester (2-2) at Cornell (0-3)

Albion-Broadus (3-1) at Wagner
Michigan (2-2) at Rutgers (4-1)
SUNY (4-0) at East Carolina (3-1)
Marshall (4-0) at Old Dominion (2-3)
Ohio St. (3-1) at Maryland (4-1)
Southern Miss. (2-3) at Middle Tennessee

Florida A&M (5-0) at Mississippi St. (4-1)
Texas (2-1) at Tennessee (2-2)
Louisiana Tech (2-2) at North Carolina
(2-2)

Toronto (2-1) at Davidson (4-1)
Drake (2-1) at Jacksonville (3-1)
The Citadel (1-3) at Wake Forest (2-2)
New Hampshire (3-1) at Elon (1-3)
Charlotte (3-2) at Gardner-Webb (2-3)
The College of William & Mary (2-2)
Howard (4-1) at NC Central (4-1)

W Carolina (2-2) at Presbyterian (2-2)
Norfolk St. (4-1) at Savannah St. (0-4)
UTEP (2-2) at Louisiana Tech (0-4)
St. Francis (Pa.) (2-3) at St. Thomas A&M
(1-4)

North Carolina (2-1) at Samford (2-2)
NC State (4-1) at Clemson (2-2)
Wake Forest (2-3) at Florida (4-2)
Alabama (4-0) at Mississippi St. (4-1)
NC A&T (4-1) vs. SC State (3-2) at At-
lanta State (4-1)

Delaware St. (4-1) at Bethune-Cookman
(2-2)
VMI (4-1) at Chattanooga (2-2)
Duke (4-1) at North Carolina (4-1)
UT-Martin (4-1) at Jacksonville St. (1-4)

Northwestern St. (2-2) at SE Louisiana
(3-2)
Morgan St. (2-3) at Florida A&M (0-4)
South Alabama (2-2) at Appalachian
State (2-2)

Butler (2-2) at Stetson (2-2)
Arkansas Pine Bluff (1-3) at Southern U.
(1-4)

East Kentucky (4-0) at Army (1-3)
Clemson (4-1) at Furman (2-2)
Clemson (4-1) at Furman (2-2)
Richmond (2-2) at Liberty (3-2)
UTEP (2-2) at Louisiana Tech (0-4)
Georgia St. (1-3) at Louisiana-Lafayette
(1-4)

Nicholls St. (0-5) at McKeesport (2-2)
UACB (2-2) at WKU (2-2)
Tennessee (4-1) at Jacksonville Tech (4-0)
South Carolina (3-2) at Kentucky (3-2)
Pittsburgh (3-1) at Virginia Tech (2-2)
Murray St. (1-3) at Tennessee Tech (1-4)

MIDWEST

Purdue (2-2) at Illinois (3-2)
Marquette (0-5) at Valparaiso (1-3)
E. Michigan (1-3) at Indiana (2-2)
Tennessee (4-1) at Missouri (3-1)

North Texas (2-2) at Akron (2-2)
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SPORTS BRIEFS

Spillman investigated for sexual assault

The Associated Press

GRAPEVINE, Texas — Dallas Cowboys special teams player C.J. Spillman is under investigation but hasn't been arrested or charged after a report of an alleged sexual assault at the team hotel last month.

Grapevine police spokesman Sgt. Robert Eberling said Wednesday night that the alleged incident took place early on the morning of Sept. 20 at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center.

The team flew to St. Louis later that Saturday, and Spillman played against the Rams the next day. He has played in all four games for the Cowboys, including last weekend at home against New Orleans.

Eberling said no other details were being released because the investigation is ongoing.

Spillman's agent and attorney declined to comment.

The Cowboys signed the 28-year-old Spillman on Sept. 1.

LeBron gets warm

welcome back

CLEVELAND — The crowd's deafening roar was so loud LeBron James couldn't hear his name announced.

Unsure of whether to walk out onto the floor, he looked around and realized he was the last one left on the bench.

Seconds later, James knew he was home.

Cleveland fans welcomed the NBA superstar back with open arms and ear-splitting screams on Wednesday night as nearly 17,000 fans showed up to watch the Cavaliers hold their annual scrimmage, a glorified practice that provided a preview of what could become a spectacular season.

Wearing the familiar No. 23 wine and gold jersey, the one he swapped for a No. 6 in Miami four years ago, James returned to the court where he took his first steps as a pro.

As he waited on the bench to be introduced, James couldn't hear the announcer say, "From Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary High School, No. 23 ..."

So James began walking out. "I really couldn't hear it," he said. "The fans were really loud and the PA was a little down, so I really couldn't hear it. It was the last person sitting on the bench, so I guess it had to be my time. But the roar was very well received and I'm grateful to be able to be



Tony Dejak/AP

The Cavaliers' LeBron James, left, stands during the national anthem Wednesday before his first scrimmage since returning to Cleveland.

in this position where the fans welcomed me back like that."

This ovation was in stark contrast to the one he got following the last game James played in for Cleveland in 2010. Following a 27-point loss to Boston in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference semifinals, a game in which he was oddly passive, James was targeted with boos and later questioned about his effort.

Two months later, he announced he was signing with the Heat.

But all has been forgiven, if not forgotten.

Women sue for grass field for World Cup

The push to get Canada to stage the Women's World Cup on grass instead of artificial turf is now a legal matter, with American star Abby Wambach and a group of players "fully prepared to go forward zealously and aggressively in court" to force a change, their lawyer said Thursday.

The players, who have no plans to boycott next year's tournament, allege gender discrimination because the men's World Cup is always staged on grass. A lawsuit was filed Wednesday at the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, naming FIFA and the

Canadian Soccer Association as defendants.

Attorney Hampton Dellinger said real grass could be installed at the six World Cup stadiums for \$2 million to \$3 million. He is seeking an expedited hearing next month so that a ruling can be issued in time for the turf to be changed.

The players say the game is inherently different on turf. The ball bounces differently, there's a greater risk of injury and the recovery period is longer — a particular concern in a tournament in which many games are compressed into a tight schedule.

Wambach, Angerer, American forward Alex Morgan, Brazil's Fabiana Da Silva Simoes and Spain's Veronica Boquete are among the players bringing the suit. They have been complaining about the issue for years — since Canada's proposal to play on artificial turf was accepted — and they sent a letter to FIFA and the CSA in July, saying they were prepared to take the legal action.

"We have to stand up and put our foot down and say, 'You know what? This isn't good enough. This isn't right and we deserve to be treated equally as the men,'" Wambach, the sport's all-time goal-scoring leader, told The Associated Press last month.

F1's Alonso discussing future with Ferrari

PARIS — Two-time Formula One champion Fernando Alonso is holding talks over his future with Ferrari, and the Italian manufacturer's outgoing president, Luca Di Montezemolo, hopes a suitable decision can be reached.

With Ferrari failing to match either Mercedes or Red Bull for speed this season and last, the Spanish driver has grown frustrated at not being able to challenge for a third title.

Ferrari finished third last year in the constructors' championship and is now fourth behind Mercedes, Red Bull and Williams with five races remaining, starting with this weekend's Japanese Grand Prix in Suzuka.

Alonso is fourth overall, but more than 100 behind Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton, who leads teammate Nico Rosberg and Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo.

The F1 champion in 2005 and 2006, Alonso has managed only two podium finishes this season and has not won a race since the Spanish GP in May last year.

Montezemolo said "if we share with him the decision" for him to leave, then it would be done "in the best way" for both parties.

In other auto racing news:

Dutch teenager Max Verstappen will become the youngest driver to take part in a Formula One Grand Prix weekend when he pilots a Toro Rosso in Friday morning's opening practice session at the Japanese Grand Prix.

Verstappen, who turned 17 on Sept. 30, has been granted a license by the sport's governing body FIA clearing him to take part in Friday's practice. He is scheduled to race for Toro Rosso in 2015.

He will be close to two years younger than current record holder Jaime Alguersuari, who was 19 years and 125 days when he contested the 2009 Hungarian Grand Prix.

Michigan backup QB to start against Rutgers

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — After leaving sophomore quarterback Shane Morris on the field following a hit to the head last weekend, Michigan coach Brady Hoke took responsibility for the program's breakdown in communication Wednesday.

Hoke did not elaborate on discrepancies between his news conference Monday and athletic director Dave Brandon's statement on Morris' injuries early Tuesday morning.

Brandon said Morris suffered a high-ankle sprain and "probable, mild concussion."

Hoke said fifth-year senior Devin Gardner will start at quarterback at Rutgers this weekend.

No new bids after Oslo drops bid to host in '22

LONDON — IOC President Thomas Bach says the Olympic body will not reopen the bidding process for the 2022 Winter Games after Oslo's withdrawal left just two cities in the race.

Bach tells The Associated Press that the International Olympic Committee is "sticking to its commitments" and "we cannot and we do not want to change the regulations in the middle of the race."

Oslo pulled out Wednesday after the Norwegian government declined to provide financial guarantees for the Games.

Oslo became the fourth city to drop out, leaving Beijing and Almaty, Kazakhstan, as the only two remaining candidates.

The IOC will select the host city next July.

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Wild, wild SEC West set for unprecedented day

By JOHN ZENOR AND
DAVID BRANDT
The Associated Press

Three teams from the powerful Southeastern Conference West Division are finally going down.

That much is assured on Saturday, when six teams ranked in the top 15 clash in an unprecedented day for any division in major college football.

First, No. 6 Texas A&M visits No. 12 Mississippi State in what will be a sea of maroon and cowbells. Then the action heads 100 miles north to Oxford for an even bigger showdown: No. 3 Alabama at No. 11 Mississippi.

Later that night, No. 15 LSU visits No. 5 Auburn. It's only the fifth time any division has had two games featuring Top 25 matchups on the same day, and the past two times it has featured SEC West teams, according to STATS.

No division has ever had a trifecta of Top 25 matchups.

Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban last week called it "The Golden Age of our division in the West." SEC West teams have won five of the past seven national titles.

The last time a conference had three ranked matchups was in the Big Ten on Oct. 18, 2003.

Alabama safety Landry Collins watched Arkansas flirt with an upset of Texas A&M on Saturday and pretty much summed up what's ahead for the six legitimate contenders in the West.

"When I was watching the game, I just said, 'This is crazy. This is going to be a crazy season,'" Collins said.

The historic day comes in a division that has a combined 28-4 record with three of those defeats coming in head-to-head matchups. Only Arkansas appears unlikely to contend, but it would be a feat for any SEC West team to emerge from the fray with a clean sweep of its division brethren.

Here's a rundown of the three big matchups:

No. 3 Alabama at No. 11 Ole Miss: Ole Miss quarterback Bo Wallace acknowledges it is tough to be a student these days. "You're sitting in class and you're trying to pay attention, but you know where your mind is at," Wallace said. Ole Miss (4-0, 1-0 SEC) is undefeated through four games for the first time since 1970 and now has a chance to end a decade of futility against the Tide. The



THOMAS GRANING, THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN/AP

Mississippi coach Hugh Freeze and players take the field for last Saturday's game in Oxford, Miss. The Rebels host No. 3 Alabama this week while No. 12 Mississippi State hosts No. 6 Texas A&M.

Rebels have lost 10 straight in the series and were shutout 25-0 last season in Tuscaloosa.

There are a myriad intriguing matchups, including one that features family ties. Alabama offensive coordinator Lane Kiffin — who has injected some style into the Tide's usually straightforward offense — will be trying to score points on his brother Chris, who is the defensive line coach for the Rebels.

Ole Miss coach Hugh Freeze didn't know if the relationship would help or hurt his team. He just knows Alabama (4-0, 1-0) is really good once again.

"Hopefully our team plays its best game of the year," Freeze said. "It's going to take that against a really superb Alabama team."

No. 6 Texas A&M at No. 12 Mississippi State: The Bulldogs have already had one big victory this season, ending a 14-game losing streak against LSU thanks to a 34-29 win on Sept. 20.

Now Mississippi State (4-0, 1-0) could really make things interesting in the West by beating the Aggies.

To do that, the Bulldogs will have to slow down Texas A&M's prolific offense that's led by first-year starting quarterback Kenny Hill. He led the Aggies (4-0, 2-0) to a stunning comeback over Arkansas on Saturday.

Mississippi State coach Dan Mullen said Hill — who is only a sophomore — is playing like a veteran.

"He's letting the ball go before receivers get in and out of breaks," Mullen said. "There's a lot of confidence that goes with that."

Mississippi State has a pretty good quarterback, too. Junior Dak Prescott has thrown for 964 yards and 11 touchdowns through four games.

No. 15 LSU at No. 5 Auburn: LSU (4-1, 0-1) could have no margin for error after its loss to Mississippi State.

"I don't think there is a person in our building that's not excited about the opportunity to go down and play very well at Auburn," LSU coach Les Miles said.

LSU handed Auburn (4-0, 1-0) its only regular-season loss last season on the way to the national championship game.

Auburn did rebound in the second half of that game after falling behind 21-0.

"Last year, that game really turned out heads," Auburn tailback Corey Grant said. "It made us realize what we were capable of."

Miles said LSU will start freshman quarterback Brandon Harris for the first time.

AP Sports Writer John Zenor reported from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and David Brandt reported from Oxford, Mississippi.



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Notre Dame wide receivers William Fuller, left, and C.J. Prosise celebrate Fuller's touchdown against Syracuse on Saturday. The Irish have scored 30 or more points in each of their games.

Irish face first real challenge

By TOM COYNE
The Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Ninth-ranked Notre Dame is about to face its stiffest challenge this season.

After beating four teams with a combined record of 7-11, with none of those opponents' victories coming against Power Five conference teams, the Fighting Irish (4-0) on Saturday host 14th-ranked Stanford (3-1), which has the nation's top-rated defense. The Cardinal also have beaten the Irish four of their past five meetings.

So it's the first real test for a young Irish squad coming off a sloppy victory over Syracuse where they won despite five turnovers. Coach Brian Kelly said he doesn't think of the game against Stanford in those terms.

"We really focus on how we need to do to get better. We turned the ball over. We gave up some big plays on the perimeter. We focus a lot more on that stuff than the bigger picture issues," he said Tuesday, adding the focus of the coaching staff is developing players. "We are not an experienced group and if we sway too far from working on getting out of our breaks and taking a direct snap, because we may fumble it, we're going to be in trouble. So that's where I really have to stay as a task master when it comes to those details."

The Irish are ranked higher than the Cardinal but are one-point underdogs, just the second time since the start of the 2011 season that an opponent has been favored over the Irish at Notre Dame Stadium. The other time was last season against Oklahoma, when the Irish were 3.5 point underdogs. The Sooners won 35-21.

That was the only home loss for the Irish in the past 16 games after starting 6-5 at home under Kelly. He attributed the improvement to a number of factors, including having better teams and making changes to the team's pregame routine, such as practicing at the stadium on Thursday and moving the pregame Mass from the morning of the game to the previous afternoon.

"At Notre Dame, there's a lot that goes on and probably just setting what I feel like is a really good schedule for our guys that doesn't overload them and then really, getting them to feel comfortable and relaxed at home," he said. "I felt like early in my time here, we were a little uptight and maybe trying to do too much. I think we have relaxed and played a lot more comfortable and really look at it as a home-field advantage."

Two years ago, the Irish beat Stanford with a goal-line stand in overtime to win 20-13 and send their confidence soaring as they improved to 6-0 during an undefeated regular season. Kelly said that 2012 squad just believed they would win close games, also beating Pittsburgh in overtime.

"Each year is a different group," Kelly said. "So we have not been in that situation yet here."

The Irish have scored 30 or more points in their opening four games, the first time they've accomplished that since the 1943 season, when they won a national championship. The Irish also haven't allowed more than 17 points, so none of the games has been close and the Irish have been behind this season for fewer than three minutes.

That's expected to change as the Irish face Stanford and then play at top-ranked Florida State in two weeks.



Texas A&M (5-0)
at Mississippi State (4-0)
AFN-Sports
6 p.m. Saturday CET
1 a.m. Sunday JKT



Alabama (4-0)
at Mississippi State (4-0)
AFN-Xtra
9:30 p.m. Saturday CET
4:30 a.m. Sunday JKT



LSU (4-1)
at Auburn (4-0)
AFN-Xtra
1 a.m. Sunday CET
8 a.m. Sunday JKT

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Huskers, Spartans: It's all about offense

By DAN KILBRIDGE
The Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Michigan State is off to a historic start on offense and welcomes another high-scoring team to begin Big Ten play against Nebraska Saturday at Spartan Stadium.

Michigan State (3-1) is ranked No. 10 in the AP poll and has scored 201 points through four games, best in school history. No. 19 Nebraska (5-0 overall, 1-0 Big Ten) is averaging 45.4 points per game.

"Two competitive football teams, two teams that don't want to lose," Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio said. "You can feel the emotion from both football teams. That's what makes college football so great, so unique."

Emotions will be higher than usual Saturday in what could be a preview of this year's Big Ten championship game in Indianapolis. Michigan State must run the table in conference play if it hopes to earn a playoff berth, and Nebraska might be the toughest remaining opponent on the Spartans' schedule. So this is certainly a game with postseason implications for both teams.

"I think it's gonna be a classic Big Ten game," left tackle Jack Conklin said. "It's a night game with another great Big Ten team, especially for me going against a guy like [Nebraska defensive end] Randy Gregory. It doesn't get much better for me competition-wise."

The Spartans are first in the Big Ten in scoring offense with the Cornhuskers No. 2 — an interesting dynamic considering Dantonio and Nebraska coach Bo Pelini are former defensive coordinators. Nebraska beat Michigan State 28-24 in 2012 at Spartan Stadium, but this game should feature more offensive highlights.

"It doesn't seem like it's out of the norm in this day and age in college football," Dantonio said of

By the numbers

201

Number of points No. 10 Michigan State has scored this season through four games.

45.4

Number of points per game No. 19 Nebraska is averaging through five games.

1-2

Where Michigan State and Nebraska rank in the Big Ten Conference in scoring offense.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

high-scoring affairs. "There are so many different ways people are lining up and creating motion and creating different formations, and it's sort of cutting edge. You see that from our offense as well."

The Spartans showed some new wrinkles on offense during a 56-14 win over Wyoming last Saturday. Co-offensive coordinators Dave Warner and Jim Bollman called a variety of end-around plays for the wide receivers and stretched the defense in different ways. Five different players had rushing touchdowns, and wide-out Keith Mumphery tallied 46



THE OMAHA WORLD-HERALD, MATT MILLER/AP

Nebraska running back Ameer Abdullah dives in for a touchdown during the first half of Saturday's game against Illinois in Lincoln, Neb. — Nebraska won 45-14.



Nebraska (5-0)
at Michigan State (3-1)
AFN-Atlantic
2 a.m. Sunday CET
9 a.m. Sunday JKT

rushing yards and one score on three carries. Michigan State has gained more than 300 yards in its last two games, but Nebraska boasts the top rushing attack in the conference.

"We definitely want to keep our run game and we want to be known as the run team in the Big Ten," Conklin said. "We're supposed to be this power team that runs the ball right at you, and it's gonna be a good game with two strong, physical teams."

Nebraska is looking to stay in first place of the West Division coming off a 45-14 win over Illinois Saturday, during which star running back Ameer Abdullah racked up 208 rushing yards and three touchdowns. Backup tailback Imani Cross also ran for 100-plus yards.

It's a tough challenge for a Spartans defense that is giving up more big plays than the 2013 installment, a unit that was No. 1 in the nation in total defense for

most of last season. Dantonio said he isn't as concerned as some, with Michigan State playing six new starters on defense this year.

"Last year's defense set the bar very high," Dantonio said. "Our defense is not broke. I know that we gave up a whopping 14 points last week, but our defense is not broke."

Michigan State defensive end Shilique Calhoun isn't satisfied with the Spartans' defense through four games, so Saturday is the perfect opportunity to make a conference-wide statement.

"We have been giving up too many points," Calhoun said. "Can we be at our best this week? They're a great team and we want to be known as a great team. It's time for us to fix our mistakes."

Horned Frogs historically give Sooners problems

By MURRAY EVANS
The Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — TCU long has been more than a mere annoyance to Oklahoma.

TCU won in shocking fashion in Norman in 2005, one of only two home losses to nonconference foes the Sooners have suffered during coach Bob Stoops' 16 seasons at Oklahoma. Last season, the visiting Horned Frogs pushed Oklahoma to the limit before the Sooners won 20-17.

A year earlier, in the first Big 12 Conference meeting between the teams, a fourth-down TCU pass fell incomplete at the goal line, allowing visiting Oklahoma to escape with a 24-17 win. So when No. 4 Oklahoma (4-0, 1-0 Big 12) plays at No. 25 TCU (3-0, 0-0) on Saturday, a close, hard-fought game would seem to be a probability.

On Monday, Stoops allowed that TCU "probably" was the best team the Sooners



LM OTERO/AP

Quarterback Trevone Boykin and TCU are ranked third in the Big 12 in total offense, averaging 532 yards.

have played so far this season.

"West Virginia, I thought, was awfully good, too," Stoops said, mentioning the squad the Sooners beat 45-33 in their Big 12 opener. "But TCU looks really, really good and has played really, really well to this point."

The Horned Frogs' calling card under longtime coach Gary Patterson has been their defense and they lead the Big 12 so far this season, allowing an average of 218.7 yards per game. Through the years, TCU's defensive schemes have proven a challenge for Stoops and his staff to overcome. Asked why, Stoops kept coming back to the same word, using a version of "fundamental" four times.

"They're sound fundamentally, really disciplined and they know what they're doing," Stoops said, noting how Patterson has "a set system ... that their players get trained in at a young age. They're really fundamental in how they do it."

TCU struggled at times offensively last season, but veteran quarterback Trevone Boykin has looked impressive in 2014 running a system that Oklahoma defensive tackle Chuka Ndulue and Stoops compared to the high-tempo offense used by Texas Tech.

"We've got to be ready for the tempo and him throwing the ball about 80 times a game or something like that," Ndulue said. TCU is third in the Big 12 in total offense at 532 yards per game and is coming off a 56-0 romp over SMU.

"The biggest difference offensively you see them spreading the ball out now," Stoops said. "Boykin is throwing the ball well and running it. They're using a bunch of players. You see them spread out and they're making you defend the whole field, which that offense does, and defend the whole field and every player. They've done a really good job to this point being highly productive offensively."

NFL

Luck on pace for record year

Colts QB could make team history

By MICHAEL MAROT
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Mike Adams got a firsthand look at Peyton Manning's record-breaking blockbuster last season in Denver.

Now the former Broncos safety is hoping to catch the sequel with his new teammates in Indianapolis.

With Andrew Luck off to the best statistical start of his pro career, the Colts' new starting safety has started detecting trends that seem to come from the same script — an offense that keeps the defense on the sideline, a scoreboard that resembles a video game and a quarterback that has seemingly mastered every facet of the game.

"It almost feels like every time a third down comes, he moves the chains and that's the key. Move the chains, move the chains and eventually you know six points are coming, so, yeah, it does kind of feel like [last year]," Adams said Wednesday.

It may not seem fair to compare Luck's spectacular early season numbers to a 16-game run from Manning, a run many consider the greatest season for a quarterback in league history. Manning threw for 5,477 yards and 55 touchdowns, both NFL records.

But if the Colts' franchise quarterback stays healthy and keeps playing this efficiently, Luck could follow his way into the conversation.

Manning's successor in Indy has never played better — and the numbers prove it.

He has completed 60 of 80 passes for 763 yards with eight touchdowns and only one interception

'It's not a shock. I think this is the kind of Andrew Luck that everybody here sees on a daily basis, and now the people that follow the stats actually may believe it.'

Coby Fleener
Colts tight end

over the past two games, and he's only been sacked twice in the past three weeks.

Instead of having to engineer late rallies, he's led the Colts (2-2) to back-to-back blowouts against division rivals. And the 25-year-old Luck leads the league with 1,305 yards and 13 touchdowns and has led the Colts to an NFL-best 136 points.

At this rate, the Colts' franchise quarterback may not only break Manning's single-season franchise records for completions, yards passing and touchdowns in fewer attempts, he would become the first player in Colts' history to throw for more than 5,000 yards and 50 touchdowns.

Coach Chuck Pagano was so impressed with Luck's 393-yard, four-touchdown performance Sunday, he even compared the current two-game run to Michael Jordan being in a zone in his prime. He's not alone.

"Wow! Fifty-two touchdowns,



Bill Kestroun/AP

Colts quarterback Andrew has completed 60 of 80 passes for 763 yards with eight TDs and just one interception this season. Luck is hoping to keep the momentum going this week against the Ravens.

wow! That's my man," Adams said when told of Luck's current pace. "I'm rooting for him."

Luck would rather focus on film study rather than the rave reviews, and he insists the biggest reason for this surge is actually his teammates.

Receivers Reggie Wayne and T.Y. Hilton are both ranked among the AFC's top 10 in receptions. Running back Ahmad Bradshaw already has a career-high four touchdown receptions.

Dwayne Allen's three TD catches are third among NFL tight ends, and an offensive line that was decimated by injuries during the preseason has managed to clear the way for Indianapolis to produce three straight 100-yard rushing games and set a club record for most total yards over a two-game span (1,027).

Luck's goal is simple: Keep the momentum.

"I think if you can get that ball rolling and not relax, not take your foot off the pedal in a sense, you hopefully can corral some of that momentum and keep it going," he said.

Indy may not need to make any major revisions Sunday against Baltimore (3-1).

While the Ravens' usually stout defense is allowing 15.0 points, the pass defense has been suspect. Opposing quarterbacks have completed 64.2 percent of their passes, thrown one interception and been sacked only four times.

And now Baltimore is up against one of the NFL's hottest quarterbacks in a city where he has never won.

Indy expected Luck to emerge as the best young quarterback in the league when it drafted him with the No. 1 overall pick in 2012.

He hasn't disappointed. As a

rookie, Luck engineered one of the greatest one-season turnarounds in league history and leading the Colts back to the playoffs.

Last year, Luck cut his interception total in half, increased his completion percentage, led the Colts to the AFC South title and directed the second-largest comeback in playoff history.

This season, Luck blamed himself for a botched play call on the goal line in Denver and a late red zone interception against Philadelphia, plays that may have cost Indy two wins.

But as he works out the kinks, Luck is becoming the headline star in the NFL's top offense.

"It's not a shock," tight end Coby Fleener said. "I think this is kind of the Andrew Luck that everybody here sees on a daily basis, and now the people that follow the stats actually maybe believe it."

Smith says Panthers 'stabbed him in the back'



Evans Vucci/AP

Ravens wide receiver Steve Smith told a Charlotte, N.C., radio station Wednesday that his former team, the Panthers had "stabbed him in the back."

By STEVE REED
The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Steve Smith took some parting shots at the Carolina Panthers, three days after the outspoken wide receiver led the Baltimore Ravens to a 38-10 win over his former team.

Smith, who spent 13 seasons in Carolina before being cut in March, called into a Charlotte radio station Wednesday and said the Panthers "stabbed him in the back."

Smith took direct aim at Dave Gettleman, saying on WFNZ-AM's Bustin' Loose that Carolina's second-year general manager said he was "a shadow of the player I used to be." Smith said the GM said that he was "jealous" of quarterback Cam Newton

"Yes, it was personal with me and Dave Gettleman," Smith told the station. "Obviously, I did something that got under his skin. And, you know what? I'm not a perfect person. There are people I run into

that get under my skin."

Smith is Carolina's all-time leader in receptions, yards receiving and touchdowns.

The wide receiver said Gettleman also called him a "nuisance" during a conversation with his agent this offseason.

Smith said Gettleman told him the team intended to trade him and laughed off the idea of Smith taking a pay cut to stay.

"It hurts me because the way I play it is basically a justification to try to show people, 'Well, we had to get rid of him because he was a nuisance,'" Smith said.

Smith suggested he might have been too competitive for Gettleman's liking.

"Maybe I have a higher standard and I want to bring people up there with me and I expect them to work hard just like me," Smith said. "Because the last [thing] I was told you're either getting better or you're getting worse."

Gettleman did not immediately return text messages seeking comment. His pol-

icy is not to speak to the media during the season.

Smith also expressed frustration at his former coach Ron Rivera, saying he "never even spoke to me through the whole ordeal."

Smith had seven catches for 139 yards and two touchdowns Sunday in the Baltimore win.

Rivera congratulated Smith after the game.

Smith said Rivera told reporters he met with him after the game "so he can look at certain ways."

Rivera said at his press conference Wednesday that he didn't feel the need to defend himself and prefers to focus on Sunday's game against the Chicago Bears.

"I'm not going to address it," Rivera said. "I have moved on and I would like to believe that we have moved on and it's time to talk about the players in this locker room."

MLB PLAYOFFS

Royals vs. Angels:
A capsule look

Schedule

(Best-of-5; x-if necessary)
 Thursday: at Los Angeles
 Friday: at Los Angeles
 Sunday: at Kansas City
 x-Monday: at Kansas City
 x-Wednesday: at Los Angeles

Season series

Tied 3-3
 May 23: Angels 6, Royals 1
 May 24: Royals 7, Angels 4 (13)
 May 25: Angels 4, Royals 3
 June 27: Angels 6, Royals 2
 June 28: Royals 7, Angels 4
 June 29: Royals 5, Angels 4

Projected lineups

Kansas City Royals		Avg.	HR	RBI
SS Alcides Escobar		.285	3	50
RF Nori Aoki		.285	1	43
CF Lorenzo Cain		.301	5	53
1B Eric Hosmer		.270	9	58
DH Billy Butler		.271	9	66
LF Alie Gordon		.266	19	74
C Salvador Perez		.260	19	70
2B Omar Infante		.252	6	66
3B Mike Moustakas		.212	15	54
Los Angeles Angels				
RF Kole Calhoun		.272	17	58
OF Mike Trout		.287	36	111
1B Albert Pujols		.272	28	105
2B Howie Kendrick		.293	7	75
SS Erick Aybar		.278	7	68
3B David Freese		.260	10	55
LF Josh Hamilton		.263	10	44
DH C. Cron		.256	11	37
C Chris Iannetta		.252	7	43

Projected rotations

Kansas City Royals		W	L	ERA
LH Jason Vargas		11	10	3.71
RH Yordano Ventura		14	10	3.70
RH James Shields		14	8	3.21
Los Angeles Angels				
RH Jered Weaver		18	9	3.59
RH Matt Shoemaker		16	4	3.04
LH C.J. Wilson		13	10	4.51

What to watch for

■ **Hamilton's health:** The Angels' \$125 million slugger missed 21 of the last 22 games with various upper-body injuries, but will return to left field for the postseason. Scioscia must figure out how much to use Hamilton's inconsistent bat, which doesn't provide a major asset at the Big A all season long.

■ **Experience counts:** The Angels haven't been to the postseason in a half-decade, but they've got ample playoff experience on their roster. Pujols has two rings and that famed three-homer performance in Game 3 of the 2011 World Series, while Freese was the MVP of the NLCS and the World Series with St. Louis just three years ago with a postseason-record 21 RBIs. Hamilton has appeared in three postseasons, while Weaver and Wilson have both pitched in the playoffs.

■ **Royals hangover:** Their epic, emotionally draining win over Oakland took 4 hours, 45 minutes. By the time they boarded a plane, flew to Los Angeles and checked into their hotel, the sun was probably rising Wednesday. Will the quick turnaround hamper them in the series opener and beyond?

—The Associated Press

Playoff managers hit, miss on replay

Nationals' Williams had highest percentage of reversal among teams in postseason

By BEN WALKER
 The Associated Press

For Buck Showalter, Don Mattingly and every other manager in these playoffs, it promises to be a most challenging postseason.

This is the first October in which skippers can contest an umpire's call. Nearly everything is subject to replay review, except for balls and strikes, but managers only get one challenge per game if they're wrong.

Based on how they did during the regular season, some teams are better than others at spotting a play that should be reversed.

"I like the job our guy did," said Showalter, set to lead Baltimore against Detroit in the AL Division Series. "You call up, say 'He missed it, or you challenge it.'"

"It ain't exactly brain surgery," he said.

Showalter and the Orioles, who hired a former minor league umpire as their replay coordinator, hit exactly 50 percent this year. They contested 28 calls, 14 got overturned.

The Major League Baseball average was a bit better — 53 percent. Managers made 1,051 challenges and 557 resulted in reversals.

"I mean, I don't know our numbers but we got a bunch of calls overturned that we wouldn't have had last year," Kansas City Royals manager Ned Yost said.

Yost did real well, in fact. He'd gotten it right almost 63 percent of the time going into Tuesday night's thrilling AL wild-card win over Oakland.

St. Louis manager Mike Matheny didn't fare so well at slightly under 39 percent. Of his 31

By the numbers

1,051

Number of calls challenged by major league managers this season.

557

Number of calls reversed after replay reviews.

82

Major league best percentage of reversals gotten by Yankees manager Joe Girardi.

challenges, only 12 were correct — he tied with Cincinnati manager Bryan Price for the fewest reversals in the majors.

When it came to those oh-so-slow strolls from the dugout onto the diamond, waiting for a bench coach to flash the thumbs-up or thumbs-down, Mattingly nearly matched the MLB average with reversals on 53.8 percent.

Among this year's crop of playoff managers, Washington's Matt Williams was best at 64.5 percent. San Francisco's Bruce Bochy was



64.5

Percentage of reversals awarded to the Nationals' Matt Williams, above, best among playoff managers.

557

Number of calls reversed after replay reviews.

over 61 percent.

Bob Melvin of the Athletics didn't spend much time trying out the review system. He made the fewest challenges overall in the majors with 26 and was right on 14 of them.

The Royals put Bill Duplissea, a former minor league catcher and previously Kansas City's bullpen catcher, in charge of replays.

"We got a real good video analyst. Very seldom does he ever make a mistake," Yost said. "You know we can't see it, so he's got to

almost like suggest what we need to do."

"And he'll tell us, 'Look, this is bang-bang, this is something that I think might be inconclusive,' or you get on there, boom, 'Challenge, right off the bat,' you know that he's dead on it."

The success rates of the other playoff managers: Detroit's Brad Ausmus was 59 percent, Pittsburgh's Clint Hurdle was 57 percent and the Los Angeles Angels' Mike Scioscia was 56 percent.

Showalter said the Orioles changed how they handled replay challenges over the course of the season, but declined to share details of those adjustments.

Their replay guru is Adam Gladstone, who spent four years umpiring in the independent minor leagues and then worked in the front office for an Orioles' affiliate.

"We hired an ex-umpire. I know a lot of guys were hiring ex-players or somebody from the organization. I wanted somebody that really thought about it through an umpire's eyes, and could take the emotion out of it," Showalter said.

The best in the big leagues at challenging was New York Yankees manager Joe Girardi, getting reversals on 23 of 28 tries for 82 percent. Chicago Cubs manager Rick Renner contested the most calls and got the most over- turns, going 5 of 56.

"It's a lot better than the NFL's first year, I can tell you that. They had to shut it down for two years," Showalter said. "So we're ahead of the curve where they're concerned."

AP Sports Writer Jayson and AP freelance writer Ian Harrison contributed to this report.

Rookies: Only four first-year managers have won World Series

FROM BACK PAGE

Brenly was the most recent, with the 2001 Diamondbacks, whose third baseman happened to be Williams. The others: Bucky Harris, 1924 Senators; Eddie Dyer, 1946 Cardinals; Ralph Houk, 1961 Yankees. Only 11 other rookie managers reached a World Series, according to STATS.

Both Williams and Ausmus are recently removed from lengthy playing careers (Williams, 48, retired in 2003 after 17 years; Ausmus, 45, stopped in 2010 after 18 years). Both reached long-time managers (Dwight Gooden, 1974 Cardinals; Jim Leyland) and kept the predecessor's bench coach and pitching coach. Both took over talented teams (the 2012 Nationals won 98 games; the Tigers' 2014 AL Central title is their fourth straight).

And both get credit in their clubhouse for keeping an even keel, connecting with players and, above all, being themselves.

"It's: How do you get the most out of these individuals and humans to win?" Ausmus said. "I think that's the most important part, and sometimes in this sabermetric age, that's lost."

The Tigers went 9-20 from mid-May to mid-June. Starter Anibal Sanchez got injured in August. They slid to second place when the Royals went on a tear. Ausmus never

First time's a charm

Rookie managers who have won World Series titles:

Bucky Harris, Washington Senators	1924
Eddie Dyer, St. Louis Cardinals	1946
Ralph Houk, New York Yankees	1961
Bob Brenly, Arizona Diamondbacks	2001

losing — whatever it was, he was the same guy," Detroit's Doc Kelly said. "I don't know about inwardly, but at least to everybody else, he was the same guy."

Williams dealt with Harper, Ryan Zimmerman, Wilson Ramos and Doug Fister each spending more than a month on the disabled list. Stephen Strasburg lobbied to stay in games longer. Bullpen management didn't come naturally.

There were three potentially disruptive moments involving Harper: what Williams called "lack of hustle" in April; Harper publicly voicing lineup opinions in June; a radio-interview flap in August over whether a slumping Harper should go to the minors.

Williams weathered everything, wound up with an NL East title and could be NL Manager of the Year.

"We've accomplished one goal, and we're looking for another and another and another, hopefully," he said, heaping praise on his staff, including bench coach Randy Knorr, pitching

coach Steve McCatty and hitting coach Rick Schu, all holdovers. "Getting to know the players was important. I think I've done a better job of that. Understanding personalities — that takes time."

Williams himself earned a certain reputation as a player. A "roughneck," outfielder Jayson Werth has called him.

"Sometimes things go bad, and you can see him over in the corner of the dugout, staring at the ears. But he bites his tongue and kind of lets it roll over," shortstop Ian Desmond said. "It's good for players to know that he's making an effort to hold back. It's, 'This is not ideal, but I'm not going to yell at you for it, because I remember what it's like.'"

Brenly recalled a 1993 episode when Williams didn't hold back. Brenly was on Baker's Giants staff, Williams was the third baseman, and Barry Bonds had just arrived.

"Barry was a big personality; very loud at times, very abrasive at times. ... One day he said something, um, uncomplimentary, let's say, about one of Matt's teammates," Brenly said. "Matty got up off his chair and confronted Barry — not in a physical way, not that he wanted to fight him or anything — and said, 'Hey, we're all in this together. You may be the new guy on this team and you may be the superstar of the team, but we're a team.'"

AP Baseball writer Noah Traister in Detroit contributed to this report.

MLB PLAYOFFS

Cards sit on playoff perch again

Year after year, St. Louis finds a way to field a contender for NL crown

By R.B. FALLSTROM
The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Even with an ever-shifting roster, the St. Louis Cardinals have a chance to reach the NL Championship Series for the fourth straight year.

"When we show up at spring training every year we set our goal to win the World Series," ace Adam Wainwright said Wednesday. "Anything else is silly. What else are you playing for if that's not the goal?"

The Cardinals repeated as NL Central champs and made it to the postseason for the 11th time in 15 years by overcoming a sputtering offense and injuries to Yadier Molina, Michael Wacha and Jaime Garcia. The profile is one of resiliency heading into an NL Division Series against the Dodgers on Friday at Los Angeles, which will start two-time NL Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw.

"I'm pitching against the Dodgers. All this me vs. Kershaw stuff is blown way out of proportion," Wainwright said. "I understand it's good TV."

Molina missed two months with a torn ligament in his right thumb, Wacha missed two months with a shoulder injury. Garcia lasted just 12 starts before surgery to relieve nerve compression.

Molina's injury had the potential to be devastating, but A.J. Pierzynski and Tony Cruz filled the void and the Cardinals moved into the division lead for good two days after Molina returned in late August.

"I thought our guys did a nice job considering all of baseball said we couldn't win a game without him," manager Mike Matheny said. "That's a knock on the rest of the guys. They realize that this stuff happens and you've just got to figure out a way to keep going."

Four straight seasons is a franchise best for the 90-win Cardinals, who won the 2011 World



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

The St. Louis Cardinals were able to win the NL Central division for the ninth time in 20 years without the services of Yadier Molina (4) for three months after he tore a ligament in his right thumb. The Cardinals got their All-Star catcher back in late August and he's been a difference-maker for St. Louis.

Series in Tony La Russa's final season.

Though the team expects to be a contender, Mike Matheny said there's no arrogance in the clubhouse.

"The conversations we had as we were popping champagne was, 'Don't take this for granted because there's some guys who had incredible careers who have never done it one time,'" the manager said. "This will be the last time for somebody in here. That's just kind of the facts. The game will humble you if you start taking the perspective that this is just going to happen all the time."



Game 1
St. Louis at Los Angeles
AFN-Sports
12:30 a.m. Saturday CET
7:30 a.m. Saturday JKT

This time last fall, Pat Neshek was looking for work, Johnny Peralta was rebuilding his reputation

with the Tigers, Randal Grichuk was a future throw-in in a deal that sent former October hero David Freese packing and John Lackey was about to augment his reputation as a big-game pitcher by beating the Cardinals twice in the World Series.

All four figure to play key roles against the high-spending Dodgers.

"We battled through the ups and downs and we got there," first baseman Matt Adams said. "I think what helps us is knowing the core group of guys on this team have been in the playoffs basically every year."

Dodgers use down time to heal up for playoffs

By BETH HARRIS
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Dodgers are heading into the postseason healthier than they were a year ago, and they hope it holds up.

The NL West champions have some question marks on their roster, most notably involving 14-game winner Hyun-Jin Ryu and second baseman Dee Gordon.

They're using the four days before the NL Division Series against St. Louis begins on Friday to heal up.

Ryu threw a simulated game on Wednesday as he rehabs from shoulder inflammation. The left-hander used all of his pitches at his normal velocity and had no problems with the left shoulder during the 45-pitch session.

He hasn't pitched in a game

since Sept. 12, when he was removed after one inning, but the Dodgers foresee him starting Game 3 in St. Louis on Monday.

The South Korean native was on the disabled list twice during the regular season, including missing nearly a month with the same problem, and bounced back each time.

In his first game back on May 21 against the Mets, Ryu pitched six innings and allowed two earned runs while striking out nine.

"It helps to know both times in the regular season I had good



Gordon

games and I'm very encouraged by that," he said. "I don't see why this time would be different."

Gordon left a game last Saturday because of irritation in his right hip, an issue that bothered him in June, too. He downplayed it during Tuesday's workout at Dodger Stadium, suggesting others are making too big a deal of it.

"It was something that was just tight," he said.

The Dodgers need a healthy Gordon on the basepaths. Their leadoff hitter led the major leagues



Ryu

with 64 steals.

With Clayton Kershaw starting Game 1 for the Dodgers against Adam Wainwright, offense could be at a premium, making it crucial to get extra bases.

"When he goes, we go," slugger Kemp said of Gordon. "We need him on base to create havoc and keep these pitchers working."

Gordon was thrown out 19 times and Cardinals All-Star catcher Yadier Molina will surely challenge him. Molina threw out nearly half the potential base stealers (21 of 44 runners) against him.

"The Cardinals are pretty well-schooled on being quick. Usually a pitching staff will neutralize the running game," Dodgers manager Don Mattingly said. "Dee has the maturity of (knowing) when you don't run."

Cardinals vs. Dodgers:
A capsule look

Schedule

(Best-of-five; x-if necessary)

Friday: at Los Angeles
Saturday: at Los Angeles
Monday: at St. Louis
x-Tuesday: at St. Louis
x-Thursday: at Los Angeles

Season series

Dodgers won, 4-3

June 26: Dodgers 1, Cardinals 0
June 27: Cardinals 3, Dodgers 1
June 28: Dodgers 9, Cardinals 1
June 29: Dodgers 1, Cardinals 0
July 18: Cardinals 3, Dodgers 2
July 19: Cardinals 4, Dodgers 2
July 20: Dodgers 4, Cardinals 3

Projected lineups

St. Louis Cardinals

	Avg.	HR	RBI
3B Matt Carpenter	.272	8	59
CF Jon Jay	.303	3	46
LF Matt Holliday	.272	20	90
SS Jhonny Peralta	.263	21	75
1B Matt Adams	.288	15	68
C Yadier Molina	.282	7	38
2B Kolten Wong	.249	12	41
RF Randal Grichuk	.245	3	8
Los Angeles Dodgers			
2B Dee Gordon	.289	2	31
CF Yasel Puig	.296	16	69
1B Adrian Gonzalez	.276	27	116
RF Matt Kemp	.287	25	89
LF Carl Crawford	.300	8	46
SS Hanley Ramirez	.283	13	71
3B Juan Uribe	.311	9	54
C A.J. Ellis	.191	3	25

Projected rotations

St. Louis Cardinals

	W	L	ERA
RH Adam Wainwright	20	9	2.38
RH Lance Lynn	15	10	2.74
RH John Lackey	14	10	3.82
RH Shelby Miller	10	9	3.74

Los Angeles Dodgers

	W	L	ERA
LH Clayton Kershaw	21	3	2.77
RH Zack Greinke	17	8	2.71
LH Hyun-Jin Ryu	14	7	3.38
RH Dan Haren	13	11	4.02

What to watch for

■ **Hot Hitters:** With four days off before Game 1, the Dodgers might wonder whether their hot-hitting lineup can stay that hot. Kemp has been tearing it up since the All-Star break after starting the season slowly. Gonzalez also struggled early, but has been a consistent run producer since the break.

■ **Deep Outfield:** Grichuk was considered an afterthought in an offseason trade for outfielder Peter Bourjos that sent 2011 postseason star David Freese to the Angels. Jay was supposed to be the fourth outfielder and got a one-year deal, a wake-up call that's prompted his strongest overall season.

■ **Closing it Out:** Manager Mike Matheny had a pushbutton approach to the late innings, with Trevor Rosenthal leading staff with 73 appearances, Seth Maness with 72 and Pat Neshek with 71. Late in the year, all of them needed rest. The side-arming Neshek was a first-time All-Star and was nearly untouchable much of the year with ERA below 1.00 until late August.

—The Associated Press

MLB

Giants vs. Nationals
A capsule look

Schedule

(Best-of-five; x-if necessary)

Friday: at Washington
 Saturday: at Washington
 Monday: at San Francisco
 x-Tuesday: at San Francisco
 x-Oct. 9: at Washington

Season series

Nationals won 5-2

June 9: Nationals 9, Giants 2
 June 10: Nationals 2, Giants 1
 June 11: Nationals 6, Giants 2
 June 12: Giants 7, Nationals 1
 Aug. 22: Giants 10, Nationals 3
 Aug. 23: Nationals 6, Giants 2
 Aug. 24: Nationals 14, Giants 6

Projected lineups

San Francisco Giants			
	Avg.	HR	RBI
CF Gregor Blanco	.260	5	38
2B Joe Panik	.305	1	18
C Buster Posey	.311	22	89
3B Pablo Sandoval	.279	16	73
RF Hunter Pence	.277	20	74
1B Brandon Belt	.243	12	37
LF Travis Ishikawa	.252	2	18
or			
LF Michael Morse	.279	16	61
SS Brandon Crawford	.246	10	69
Washington Nationals			
CF Denard Span	.302	5	37
3B Anthony Rendon	.287	21	83
RF Jayson Werth	.292	16	82
1B Adam LaRoche	.259	26	92
SS Ian Desmond	.255	24	91
LF Bryce Harper	.273	13	32
C Wilson Ramos	.267	11	47
2B Asdrubal Cabrera	.241	14	61

Projected rotations

San Francisco Giants			
	W	L	ERA
RH Jake Peavy	7	13	3.73
RH Tim Lincecum	9	13	3.57
LH M. Bumgarner	18	10	2.98
RH Ryan Vogelsong	8	13	4.00
Washington Nationals			
RH Stephen Strasburg	14	11	3.14
RH J. Zimmermann	14	5	2.66
RH Doug Fister	16	6	2.41
LH Gio Gonzalez	10	10	3.57

What to watch for:

■ **Playoff tested:** The Giants have won eight straight postseason games dating to their 2012 World Series run and have been at their best in October. They have won seven consecutive elimination games in the postseason after beating Pittsburgh.

■ **Strasburg's debut:** The No. 1 pick in the 2009 amateur draft will show what he can do in the postseason spotlight. The Nationals shut down Strasburg in September 2012 to protect his surgically repaired pitching elbow, a decision hotly debated as the club exited the playoffs.

■ **Storén's second chance:** A night after Werth's walk-off homer in the bottom of the ninth forced a Game 5 in the 2012 NLDS against the Cardinals, the Nationals went from the highest of highs to the lowest of lows. Leading 7-5 with two outs in the ninth, Washington let the series slip away as Storén failed to record the final strike, walked two batters, then allowed a pair of two-run singles to a 9-7 loss.

—The Associated Press

Resilient Giants blast Pirates

San Francisco set to take on Washington in Division Series

By WILL GRAVES
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Madison Bumgarner grabbed four beers, tilted his head back and chugged like a champion.

Then again, the San Francisco ace has plenty of practice.

The Giants celebrating in a soaked clubhouse on the road? Must be October. Next stop: Washington.

Bumgarner dominated the Pittsburgh Pirates in an 8-0 whitewash in the National League wild-card game on Wednesday night, tossing a four-hitter as the Giants advanced to the best-of-five Division Series in Washington starting on Friday.

"If you don't want to pitch in these games, you probably need to find something else to do," Bumgarner said.

No chance of the Giants doing that anytime soon. They've ended each even year this decade with a World Series title. The quest for a third to join the championships they captured in 2010 and 2012 began in familiar fashion, with a lights-out performance on the mound and enough offense to get by.

"We thrive in these situations," shortstop Brandon Crawford said. "I don't know what it is. We just keep fighting no matter what the circumstance."

The Giants won their eighth consecutive postseason game — dating back to the 2012 NL championship series when they rallied from a 3-1 deficit to stun St. Louis and a seventh straight with their season on the line — including the division series games at Cincinnati that year. The memories of that run remain fresh in a clubhouse that seems to thrive once



GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

San Francisco's Brandon Crawford hits a grand slam off Pittsburgh Pirates starting pitcher Edinson Volquez during the fourth inning of the NL wild-card playoff Wednesday in Pittsburgh.

the games start to wind.

"We've been through it before, a lot of this team has," Brandon Belt said. "We used that experience tonight. We know when we get in these situations we're going to have a good ballclub."

Mixing his fastball with a slider and curve the Pirates rarely touched, Bumgarner was in complete control and looked very much like the ace who won 18 games during San Francisco's bumpy regular season.

"We got outplayed tonight," Pittsburgh second baseman Neil

Walker said. "Bumgarner went out there, he did what he wanted to do. He put up the strike zone and he made it tough on us."

So did Crawford, whose grand slam off Edinson Volquez in the fourth inning was the first in postseason history by a shortstop and he wasn't aiming for the fences.

With the bases loaded in the fourth and nobody out in a scoreless game, Crawford turned on Volquez's hanging breaking ball and sent it to right. Pittsburgh's Travis Snider wanted to play it off the wall. He never got the chance, instead slumping his shoulders as the ball landed a couple of rows deep to give the Giants a 4-0 lead that felt considerably larger.

"I was in shock a little bit," Crawford said.

So were the Pirates, who never recovered. One night after Kansas City edged Oakland in a thrilling start to baseball's postseason, this one was over by the middle innings.

Overpowering one of the NL's best lineups, Bumgarner walked one and threw 79 strikes in his latest stellar October performance. The left-hander, who allowed only four singles, has thrown 15 scoreless innings in two World Series starts.

Volquez was trying to cap his comeback season by sending Pittsburgh to the NLDS for the second straight year, but he

Scoreboard

Wild card

Tuesday: Kansas City 9, Oakland 8, 12 innings
 Wednesday: San Francisco 8, Pittsburgh 0

Division Series

(Best-of-five)

(x-if necessary)

American League

Baltimore vs. Detroit

Thursday: Detroit (Schlerzer 18-5) at Baltimore (Tillman 13-6)
 Friday: Detroit (Verlander 15-12) at Baltimore (Chen 16-6)
 Sunday: Baltimore (Gonzalez 10-9) at Detroit (Price 15-12)

x-Monday: Baltimore at Detroit (Porcello 15-13)

x-Wednesday, Oct. 8: Detroit at Baltimore

Los Angeles vs. Kansas City

Thursday: Kansas City (Veras 11-10) at Los Angeles (Weaver 18-9)

Friday: Kansas City (Ventura 14-10) at Los Angeles (Shoemaker 16-4)

Sunday: Los Angeles (Wilson 13-10) at Kansas City (Shields 14-8)

x-Monday: Los Angeles at Kansas City

x-Wednesday, Oct. 8: Kansas City at Los Angeles

National League

Washington vs. San Francisco

Friday: San Francisco (Deay 7-13) at Washington (Strasburg 14-11)

Saturday: San Francisco at Washington

Monday: Washington at San Francisco

x-Tuesday, Oct. 7: Washington at San Francisco

x-Thursday, Oct. 9: San Francisco at Washington

Los Angeles vs. St. Louis

Friday: St. Louis (Wainwright 20-9) at Los Angeles (Kershaw 21-3)

Saturday: St. Louis (Lynn 15-10) at Los Angeles

Monday: Los Angeles at St. Louis

x-Tuesday, Oct. 7: Los Angeles at St. Louis (Miller 10-9)

x-Thursday, Oct. 9: St. Louis at Los Angeles

Wednesday

NL wild card
Giants 8, Pirates 0

San Francisco		Pittsburgh	
ab	r	ab	r
gBlanc f	1	JHrrsn 3b	4
Panik 2b	5	Merces ss	4
Posey c	5	Alber cf	3
Sandoval 3b	4	RMartin c	4
Ariaa lf	4	Marin lf	4
Pence rf	4	NWalker 2b	4
Belt 1b	3	GSchick 2b	4
Edinson p	1	Snyder rf	2
Ishikawa lf	2	JHughes p	0
LF Perez lf	1	LF P	0
Bmgn p	4	Hidkmp	0
		Mord ph	0
		Mein p	0
		Volquez p	0
		JuWinn p	0
		Tabat rf	0

Totals 37 811 8 Total 37 34 0

San Francisco 000 401 210-8

Pittsburgh 000 000 000-9

E—Arias (1), B—Crawford (1), DP—Pittsburgh 1, LOB—San Francisco 8, Pittsburgh 16—B—Crawford (1).

San Francisco

Bumgarner W-L-O 9 4 0 0 0 1 10

Pittsburgh

Volquez L-O-1 5 5 5 5 3 3

W-Wilson 3 1 0 0 0 1 1

J-Hughes 3 3 2 2 2 1 1

LaRoche 2 1 0 0 0 0 0

Holdkorn 1 2 1 1 1 1 1

Melanson 1 1 0 0 0 0 0

Volquez pitched to 1 batter in the 6th. WP—Ju. Wilson. T—3:12. A—40,629 (38,362).

couldn't match Bumgarner.

The right-hander cruised until the fourth, when a pair of singles and a walk loaded the bases with none out. He'd retired Crawford 19 of the 22 times he'd faced him during his career.

It's the 24th that he'll remember.

"I tried to bounce it down, back foot, and the ball just kept going," Volquez said. "Bad spot."

That was more than enough for Bumgarner. Pittsburgh, fourth in the majors in extra-base hits this season, rarely hit the ball hard.



DON WRIGHT/AP

San Francisco starting pitcher Madison Bumgarner threw a complete-game shutout. He walked one and struck out 10.

SPORTS



Colts QB Luck on pace for record-shattering season
NFL, Page 28

MLB PLAYOFFS

Rookies with veteran poise

It's: How do you get the most out of these individuals and humans to win? I think that's the most important part, and sometimes in this sabermetric age, that's lost.

Brad Ausmus
Detroit Tigers manager

First-year managers Ausmus, Williams keep clubs on even keel all the way to postseason

By HOWARD FENDRICH
The Associated Press

Matt Williams was in his 18th game as a major league manager, still learning on the job, when he went with his gut.

Williams saw Bryce Harper hit a comebacker in the sixth inning, jog out of the batter's box and veer off toward the home dugout, several strides before first base. Williams yanked Harper from the Washington Nationals' lineup. That decision in April was one of many that made clear Williams would do things his way, something he was taught by a couple of his managers, Dusty Baker and Bob Brenly.

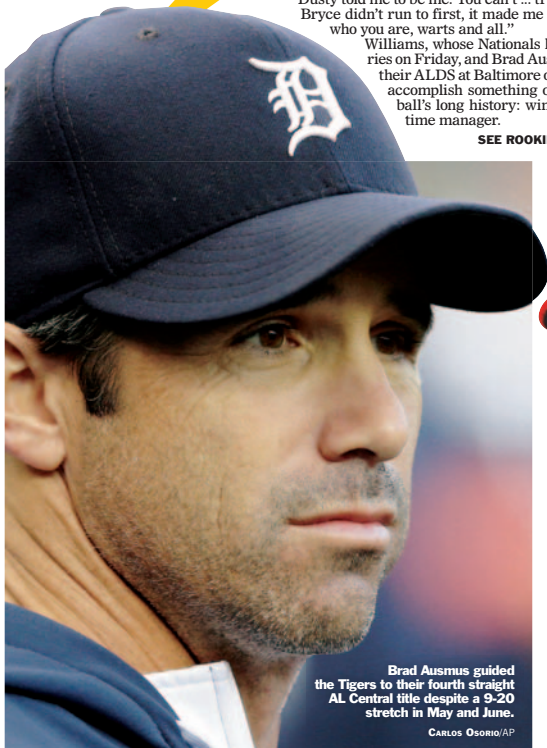
"Dusty told me to be me. You can't ... try to be somebody that you're not. When Bryce didn't run to first, it made me mad," Williams said. "You've got to be who you are, warts and all."

Williams, whose Nationals host Game 1 of an NL Division Series on Friday, and Brad Ausmus, whose Tigers were to open their ALDS at Baltimore on Thursday, are attempting to accomplish something only four men have in baseball's long history: win a World Series as a first-time manager.

SEE ROOKIES ON PAGE 29

Dusty (former San Francisco Giants manager Baker) told me to be me. You can't ... try to be somebody that you're not. ... You've got to be who you are, warts and all.

Matt Williams
Washington Nationals manager



Brad Ausmus guided the Tigers to their fourth straight AL Central title despite a 9-20 stretch in May and June.

CARLOS OSORIO/AP



In his 18th game as a major league manager, Matt Williams benched a star player for not hustling.

GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

Giants pound Pirates to reach NLDS » Page 31 ■ Cardinals in familiar position » Page 30
Replay a hit-or-miss affair for postseason managers » Page 29